



Northstar Glassworks, Inc.

BoroNews Newsletter

January 2002

Issue 2

The Wonderful World of Exotics

In each of the next nine Northstar BoroNews Newsletters there will be in-depth looks at the Northstar family of colors. Each newsletter will cover a group of colors that share similar working properties and composition. Also, each edition will feature information on how to work the color, what effects the color can produce, and inspirational new methods of color application. This series of newsletters will be a useful resource guide for beginners, and give experienced lamp workers inspiration and the knowledge to better utilize Northstar Borocolour®.

Exotics Come First

The first family to be covered in this series is the Exotic family. A color group consisting of NS-27 Green Exotic, NS-28 Blue Exotic, NS-29 Red Exotic, and NS-47 Aurora. This group demands a great deal of attention when working and can yield a wide array of pleasing results. Though challenging, the versatility of this color group is so wide, further information is necessary to fully utilize all of the possibilities.

Working Tips

To achieve the most vibrant range of effects with NS-27 Green Exotic, NS-28 Blue Exotic, or NS-29 Red Exotic use a strong oxidizing flame and encase in clear. There are many effects that can be produced ranging from a metal fume effect, mirror-like sheen, and many other variations depending on how the color is applied and worked. Achieving a metal fume effect may be done several ways. One method is to reduce the piece slightly just before you are finished. The other manner is to reduce the rod and then coat it with clear glass. Note that these colors have a slightly higher C.O.E and could cause cracking if encased, depending on size, thickness, and annealing cycle of the piece.

For NS-47 Aurora it is also possible to get a full spectrum of colors depending on which flame is used as well as whether the piece is encased in clear or a color. To achieve vibrant blues, try working it in a highly oxidizing flame. To yield a green, work it in a neutral flame. To generate vibrant deep reds, work the piece in a neutral flame then reduce the piece when it is close to completion.

Application Tips

The exotics present a wide array of effects and textures, but application and combination with other colors can enhance the beauty of the exotics and add depth to one's artwork. A few of the numerous possibilities are as follows: try layering an exotic over NS-54 Starwhite or NS-41 Butterscotch and then layering clear over it. A white backing acts as a mirror for the exotic, and the clear adds a magnifying effect. Another pleasing effect is to layer NS-34 Extra Light Yellow or NS-19 Light Cobalt over an exotic, which will attain a glowing hazy turquoise blue. NS-34 Extra Light Yellow is recommended because it will not overpower the exotic, but will give it a frosty glow. One of Paul Trautman's favorite effects utilizing the exotic palette is to layer NS-07 Ruby or NS-07L Light Ruby and clear in different areas over NS-27 Green Exotic, producing a spectrum of vibrant ruby reds with a beige/ yellow edge to iridescent greens.

Further Advice

Though this is just a glimpse of what these colors can create and how they work, keep reading in the future for further instructional advice, and new creative ways to work with exotics. Keep exploring and experimenting! There are many avenues left uncharted. May your creativity grow with every new piece!



Figure 1

Pictured here in lower right (figure 3) are three lampworked bottles utilizing the Exotics. Starting from the left, the first bottle is made with NS-27 Green Exotic that has been encased by NS-07 Ruby. By swirling NS-07 Ruby over the NS-27 Green Exotic it created the marbled pattern. The second bottle is also made with NS-27 Green Exotic with a straight coil layer of NS-07 Ruby over it. The reason for the color transition is the way it was struck. The piece was selectively struck in the flame and then flame annealed, creating a pleasing transition from struck to un-struck parts of the vessel. The third piece was made with a base of NS-54 Starwhite, followed by a layer of NS-28 Blue Exotic over it and then encased with NS-34 Extra Light Yellow twisted dots. Note the transition from a deep greenish yellow to a silvery blue. For a deeper green try reducing the piece before annealing it. The NS-34 Extra Light Yellow really makes the piece glow, allowing a transition from blue to blue-green to subtly occur.

Pictured here at left (figure 1) are three lampworked blown vessels using NS-47 Aurora. The green vessel has NS-47 Aurora layered on using the coil method over NS-54 Starwhite as a reflector. All three vessels were encased in clear, by dotting the vessel with hobnails of clear to make the pattern. Even though the vessels were all made with the same color, many different colors were produced due to each piece being worked in different flame settings. For instance, working the piece in a strong oxidizing flame produced the blue color. Working the piece in a neutral flame yielded a green. Similarly working the piece in a neutral flame but then reducing it in the end brought out the deep red. To sustain the blue effect keep an oxidizing flame on the piece at all times!



Figure 2

Above (figure 2) are medallions by Paul Trautman, which show the varied effects you can achieve by layering NS-07L Light Ruby over NS-27 Green Exotic to produce a wide array of effects ranging from a vibrant caramel color where the colors touch, to a deep red. By layering clear over the NS-27 Green Exotic creates an intense royal or olive green.



Figure 3