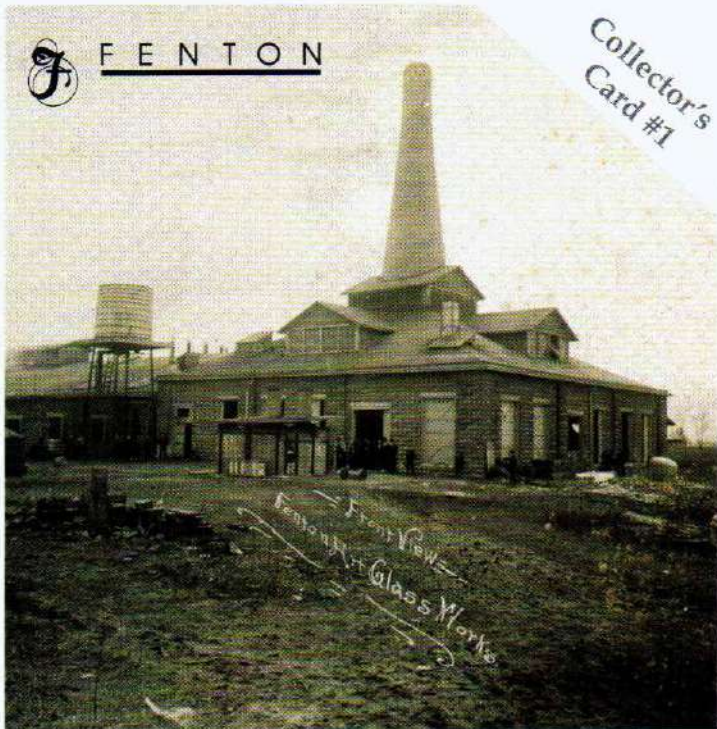




F E N T O N

Collector's  
Card #1



Founded in 1905 by brothers Frank L. Fenton and John W. Fenton, the Fenton Art Glass Company began as a glass decorating firm in Martins Ferry, Ohio. Another brother, Charles Fenton, soon joined the organization.

The company built a factory in Williamstown, West Virginia. Glass was first made there on January 2, 1907.



*Pattern No. 8, now known as Waterlily and Catails, was the first Fenton glassware made at Williamstown.*

The first Fenton products were crystal and colored glass in amethyst, blue, green and ruby. In late 1907, Fenton introduced iridescent ware, made by spraying hot glass articles with a solution of metallic salts. Known today as "Carnival glass," Fenton's iridescent ware was a success in the marketplace, and other glass companies quickly imitated it.

In 1909, John left to start a glass factory in Millersburg, Ohio, but two more brothers – James and Robert – joined the growing enterprise.

When Frank L. Fenton passed away in 1948, his sons – Frank M. Fenton and Wilmer C. "Bill" Fenton – became president and vice-president, respectively.

Today, the Fenton Art Glass Company is known worldwide as a leader in the production of handmade art glass. Members of the third and fourth generations of the Fenton family occupy key management positions.

Fenton is recognized for its famous glass colors and artistry in hand-painted decorations. Each piece of Fenton glass – reflecting the glass-workers' heritage and pride – brings a special feeling to its owner.



F E N T O N

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FENTON

Collector's  
Card #2



75



These seven special pieces of Fenton art glass were offered on QVC shows between January and November, 1998, in celebration of Bill Fenton's 75th year.

Wilmer C. "Bill" Fenton, Chairman of the Board of the Fenton Art Glass Company, first appeared on QVC in October, 1988. Since that time, he and host Steve Bryant have been together many times on the QVC broadcasts, bringing the pleasures of Fenton glass to their many "fans" across the United States.

To celebrate Bill's 75th year, Fenton and QVC developed seven special items of Fenton art glass for QVC shows. These seven pieces reflect both Bill's personal favorites in colors and shapes as well as the Fenton heritage of glassmaking.

In addition to the Fenton logo, these seven articles are inscribed with the signature of Bill Fenton and a special "75" symbol. Decorated pieces are handpainted and signed by the individual artist.

- CV2032A Spruce Green overlay decorated pitcher (January)
- CV212AJ Champagne Opalescent iridized satin Drapery basket with aquamarine edge and handle (March)
- CV221CC Cranberry Heavy Drape pitcher with ribbed handle (April)
- C7424U1 Royal Purple rose bowl with handpainted floral decoration (June)
- C1500Q9 Misty Blue opalescent guest set with plum handle and handpainted pansies decoration (August)
- C6839BC Wisteria stretch basket with dark plum edge and handpainted wisteria flowers (October)
- C15546J Cobalt blue 9" hexagonal vase with Spruce Green edge and handpainted morning glories (November)



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F E N T O N

Collector's  
Card #3



Blue is Bill Fenton's favorite color, and this cobalt blue 9" hexagonal vase with spruce green edge and handpainted morning glories decoration reflects the best of the Fenton tradition in glassmaking.

Like all Fenton glass, this special vase began with raw materials – silica sand, soda ash and lime – combined with carefully measured coloring agents such as cobalt oxide. The vibrant hue recalls Fenton's Royal Blue, popular in the 1920s when Bill was a youngster in Williamstown.

A team of 19 glassworkers, including specially skilled craftsmen (gatherer, blocker, blower, ringer and finisher), worked together to create each vase. The application of a contrasting colored ring, developed for Fenton by Pete Raymond in 1938, is a distinctive feature of Fenton art glass.

Inspired by her favorite flowers, Robin Spindler designed the handpainted morning glories motif. A decorator at Fenton since 1979, Robin received an Award of Excellence from *Collector Editions* magazine in 1998.

Fenton decorators use unique blends of colored enamels, including a dozen different whites! Each handpainted piece is proudly signed by the individual artist and fired to 1000°F for permanence.

This heartfelt message from Bill Fenton appears on the underside of each vase: "As I celebrate my 75th year, I am thankful to have worked with great people, served the best customers and been blessed with the best family."



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F E N T O N

Collector's  
Card #6

## The Fenton Family



Standing (left to right): Don A. Fenton; George W. Fenton; Nancy G. Fenton; Lynn Fenton Erb; Christine Fenton; Shelley Fenton Ash; Michael D. Fenton; and Thomas K. Fenton. Seated (left to right): Randall R. Fenton; Wilmer C. "Bill" Fenton; Frank M. Fenton; and Scott K. Fenton.

In January, 1999, more than 600 company employees, including three generations of Fenton family members, are actively involved with Fenton glass. All continue and enrich the Fenton experience, a tradition of pride and craftsmanship begun by Frank L. Fenton and his brother, John W. Fenton, when the Fenton Art Glass Company was founded in 1905.

Frank M. Fenton and Bill Fenton are sons of company founder Frank L. Fenton. In 1948, following the death of their father, they took on the offices of President and Vice-President, respectively. For some three decades, Frank and Bill were "partners" in the day-to-day operations and the growth of the company. In 1978, Frank became Chairman of the Board and Bill became President.

In 1986, Frank retired to the position of Historian, and Bill became Chairman of the Board as Frank's son George W. Fenton was named President. Frank's son Tom is Vice-President—Manufacturing and son Mike is Safety Director and Purchasing Manager. Nancy G. Fenton (who is married to George) is Director of Design and oversees the development of new products.

Bill's son Don is Vice-President—Sales, and his daughter Shelley is Graphics Manager and handles several key accounts. Son Randy is Treasurer of the Fenton Gift Shop, and daughter Christine is Data Processor for the Gift Shop.

As Sales and Marketing Specialist, Lynn is involved in the company's strategic planning and serves as editor of the Fenton "Glass Messenger" publication. Also in the sales area, Scott works with international accounts and internet administration. Lynn and Scott are grandchildren of Frank M. Fenton.



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F E N T O N

Collector's  
Card #7



Since the 1970s, glass made by the Fenton Art Glass Company has been marked with a logo in the glass. The logos shown above (all with the name "Fenton" inside a horizontal oval) are the ones most often seen.

The logo on the left was first used to mark Fenton Carnival glass in 1970. By 1975, this logo was in all Fenton moulds then in production.

The small "8" (as seen in the middle logo) designates Fenton glass made in the 1980s decade. The small "9" (as seen in the logo on the right) signifies Fenton glass produced in the 1990s.

The logo is usually in the center of the outside bottom of such pieces as pitchers, bowls and vases. On figurines, candleholders and other pressed shapes, the logo may appear on the side of the piece in an unobtrusive place. When a pressed piece is fire-polished, the logo may lose some definition, and only the outline can be readily seen.

On some blown or satin-finished articles, the logo may be very difficult to see because its impression is weak. To compensate for this, Fenton sandblasted the eighties and nineties logos on some items, and a decal with the Fenton script "F" symbol was also used on some occasions.



Since 1983, Fenton has used another mark — a vertical oval with the single letter "F" inside — on glass made from moulds purchased from other companies (such as Imperial, McKee or Westmoreland) and on glass made for some private mould customers. An added "9" denotes the decade of the nineties.



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F E N T O N

Collector's  
Card #8



Gold Amberina is one of the Fenton Historic Colors for 1999 (the other is Violet Satin). Items made in Gold Amberina are limited edition pieces, and each is numbered individually. The decoration, featuring ferns and open seedpods, was designed by Robin Spindler.



Fenton's Gold Amberina recalls the famous art glass produced at the New England Glass Works in New Bedford, Massachusetts, more than a century ago. Joseph Locke patented a process for making an homogeneous glass with various shaded colors in July, 1883, and this ware was soon being marketed under the trade name "amberina."

Although Fenton's color is comparable to the glass made from Locke's patent, Gold Amberina is a cased or overlay glass, using a special technique to fade the color from the top of the piece to the bottom. The process begins with a small "bud" of gold ruby glass on the end of a blowpipe. A gatherer covers the bud with a layer of amber glass, and another glassworker (called a blocker) then shapes the gob and enlarges it with a puff of his breath. The glassblower then brings the item to shape in a cast iron mould. Another glassworker called a finisher will re-shape or crimp the topmost edge with various tools.

The cruet with its ribbed stopper also harks back to the 1880s, when the dining tables of the affluent were graced with condiment articles of all kinds, including gracefully-shaped "oil bottles" intended to hold vinegar or other liquids used in seasoning food. These condiment sets were often housed in elaborate silver-plated holders.

Each piece of Fenton's Gold Amberina preserves part of the heritage and history of the American glass industry. Every Fenton artisan takes pride in our place in that heritage and history.



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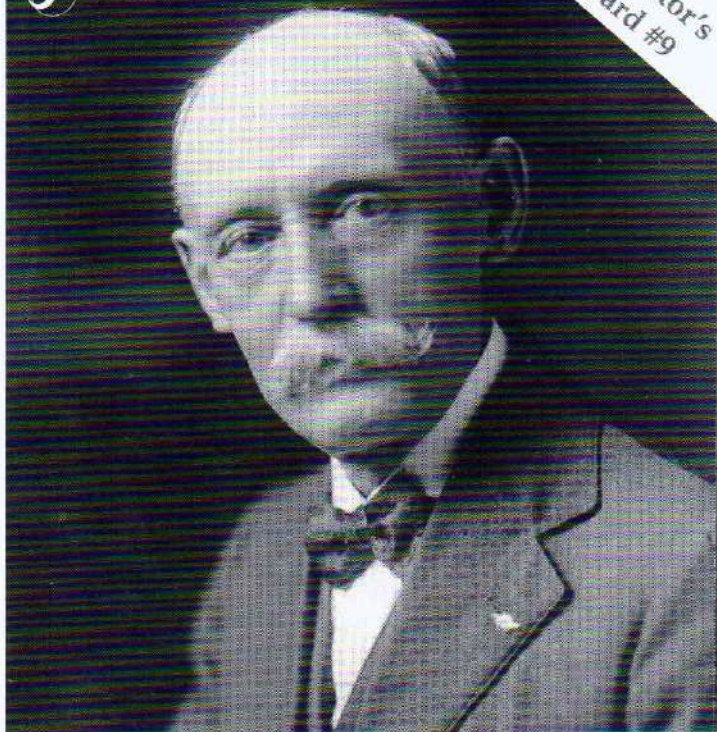
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FENTON

Collector's  
Card #9



In October, 1906, Jacob Rosenthal was hired to oversee the construction of the Fenton plant in Williamstown. He became the company's first factory manager and was responsible for many of Fenton's glass colors until his death in 1933.

Born in Pittsburgh in 1855, Rosenthal became a carrying-in boy at Campbell, Jones & Co. on Pittsburgh's South Side at age 11. He later worked in various Ohio Valley cities—Bellaire, Bridgeport, and Martins Ferry. Adept at gathering, pressing, blowing and finishing, he was active in the American Flint Glass Workers Union, serving as president of Local Union No. 15 in Martins Ferry.

In 1898, Rosenthal was manager of the Royal Glass Co. in Marietta, Ohio. When that firm became part of National Glass in 1899, Rosenthal was needed at other National plants. At the Indiana Tumbler and Goblet Works in Greentown, Indiana, he perfected several innovative glass colors, including Chocolate, Golden Agate, and an opaque green.

At Fenton, Rosenthal worked with sons Clarence and Paul. Clarence was in charge of the mould room, and Paul was assistant manager until succeeding his father in 1926. Another son, physician Harry Rosenthal, had a successful practice in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

Jacob and Susan Rosenthal celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 26, 1925. They were fondly called "Uncle Jake and Aunt Susan" by youngsters Frank and Bill Fenton in the 1920s, although they were not really related.

Rosenthal experimented with glass colors until his death on February 26, 1933. The editor of a trade publication captured the essence of his career with four short words: "Glass was his life."



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FENTON

Collector's  
Card #10



There is something delightful about a fairy light, as the shimmering flame from a small candle casts its warm glow through the colored glass chimney. The Fenton fairy lights shown above are: Sunset on Cameo Satin (1981-82); Pink Dogwood on Burmese (1981); and Green Opalescent Swirled Feather (1953).



Fairy lamps occupy a splendid chapter in the history of glassmaking. A British candle manufacturing firm, Clarke's Pyramid and Fairy Light Company, advertised widely during the 1880s, and its namesake, Samuel Clarke, held the British patent rights for several fairy lamp designs.

American glass factories, such as Hobbs-Brockunier and the Phoenix Glass Company, made fairy lights in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The advent of electric light and widespread electrification for buildings and residences almost made candlelight extinct.

Fenton has produced many different lighting devices, including candleholders and candlesticks, as well as lamp founts, chimneys and complete lamps. Fairy lights, however, have been in the Fenton line only since the 1950s.

In the 1950s, the first Fenton fairy light was a one-piece, blown item, made from a shade with its bottom finished to make a stable base. It was produced in several opalescent colors (French, blue, cranberry and green) in 1953 and, later, in Burmese glass.

Two-piece and three-piece fairy lights have been important parts of the Fenton line for over two decades. Some of these are pressed patterns (such as Hobnail, Lily of the Valley or Persian Medallion), while others have pressed bases and blown shades.

Numerous decorated fairy lights, including some limited editions with Christmas motifs, have been made in opaque glass since the 1970s.



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FENTON

Collector's  
Card #11



Violet Satin is one of the Fenton Historic Colors for 1999 (the other is Gold Amberina). The handpainted decoration, featuring a floral motif with icy green leaves, was designed by Kim Plauche'.

More than seventy years ago, Fenton made a non-iridescent hue called Orchid, but it was rather short-lived in the 1920s. The appeal of Violet Satin for today's collector is greatly enhanced by Fenton's unique iridescent treatments and handpainted decorations.

Like all Fenton glass, Violet Satin begins with the basic ingredients of a glass batch—silica sand, soda ash and lime. The major coloring agent is manganese, but a very small amount of "powder blue" (cobalt oxide) is also used.

Fenton chemists have developed slightly different batch formulations in anticipation of making items of various thicknesses in Violet Satin. Some items, such as the tulip or jack-in-the-pulpit vase shown on this card, are made as blown glass, while others, such as animal figurines, are pressed ware.

After each item has been pressed or blown, it is sprayed with a solution of metallic salts to achieve the iridescent effect (this is the same technique used at Fenton in making our first iridescent ware in late 1907).

The shapes of some items are changed after spraying and re-heating to achieve the satin finish, and this creates a "stretch" effect on these pieces. Fenton produced this kind of ware in various colors during the 1920s, and it is well-known and popular with Fenton glass collectors.

The handpainted decoration combines icy green leaves with an attractive white flower. These hues complement the Violet Satin glass beautifully and create a most pleasant effect.



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FENTON

Collector's  
Card #12



Louise Piper and a Fenton Silver Crest basket handpainted with her Violets in the Snow design (these were produced from 1968 to 1977).



About 1920, a curious Louise Piper often stopped to watch some German glass decorators at work on her way to school. Invited in for a closer look, she was allowed to try her hand at painting floral motifs. She was an eager pupil under demanding teachers, and thus began her lifelong career as a glass decorator.

Born in Irwin, Pa., in 1908, Louise Piper was just 13 when she first worked part-time at the Jeannette Shade and Novelty Co. This firm had ties with the nearby Westmoreland Glass Company and a china decorating plant, and Louise decorated at these places, too. In the 1960s, Fenton decided to open a decorating department. Designer Tony Rosena recommended Louise Piper, for he had worked with her at the Jeannette firm.

Her arrival in April, 1968, marked the start of the Fenton Decorating Department which continues today. Louise was about 60 years old when she came to Williamstown, and Frank M. Fenton recalls that she was sensitive about her age. "Later, she was proud to be working in her 70s," Frank remembers, "and she didn't care if people knew how old she was!"

Louise Piper's initial decoration design was Violets in the Snow, but she created many elaborate floral motifs (such as Rose Burmese, Silver Poppies, and Pink Blossom) and realistic depictions of wildlife, such as the Chickadee lamps, Butterflies on Bamboo, and Cardinals in Winter.

Louise Piper retired from Fenton in 1989 at age 81. She passed away in 1995. Her decoration designs are highly collectible, and handpainted pieces with her signature are a collector's delight!



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F E N T O N

Collector's  
Card #13



Cranberry opalescent barber bottle (made for L. G. Wright in mid-1930s); Milk glass Fenton footed candy jar (made 1969-89 and 1991-92); and French opalescent cologne bottle (made for the Allen B. Wrisley Co., 1939-40).

Any mention of Fenton Hobnail will make Bill Fenton smile. "Hobnail was our bread and butter," he says. "It sold well for a long time, and many Fenton glass collections started with the Hobnail pattern."

In the mid-1930s, two private mould customers—the Lightolier Co. and the L. G. Wright Glass Co.—contracted with Fenton for the production of hobnail items. A Wright hobnail barber bottle was on the desk of Frank L. Fenton when sales representative Martin Simpson was visiting. Simpson took the bottle back to Chicago, and a buyer for a cologne manufacturer, the Allen B. Wrisley Co., happened to see it.

The Wrisley firm wanted Fenton to make blown hobnail bottles modeled after the Wright piece. A more economical design was soon worked out, and the Wrisley bottle kept Fenton blow shops busy for several years. The Wrisley bottle—filled with cologne, fitted with a wooden stopper and graced with a ribbon—retailed for one dollar in 1939-40!

The Wrisley bottle stimulated the design of an entire Fenton Hobnail line, and company catalogs spanning four decades attest to its growth and extent. Whenever Bill and his brother Frank M. Fenton saw an interesting shape in another medium or pattern, they soon wondered aloud, "Why don't we make something like this in Hobnail?"

Milk glass was the most popular color for this pattern (over 300 items were made!), but Fenton Hobnail was produced in many other colors—transparent and opaque—as well as in opalescent treatments. Although Hobnail has been a relatively small part of the Fenton line in recent years, some articles are almost always available.

Collector Shirley Griffith has published a book about Fenton milk glass Hobnail, and other books on Fenton glass discuss this pattern (to order these books, call the Fenton Gift Shop, 1-800-319-7793).



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F E N T O N

Collector's  
Card #14



Collectors who prize Fenton's Burmese glass should be thankful for the efforts of Charles "Charley" Goe, who worked at the company from 1960 until his untimely death in 1969.



A native of Marietta, Goe graduated with Phi Beta Kappa honors from Marietta College in 1951. From 1952-1955, he served in the U. S. Navy, leaving as a lieutenant. In 1957, he received his M. A. in mathematics from Ohio State University and was employed as a statistician and development chemist at the American Cyanamid Company. Goe and his wife Caroline lived in Williamstown with their son and daughter.

Frank M. Fenton learned that Goe was slated for transfer by American Cyanamid. "One evening after choir practice, Charley said he really didn't want to move his family," Frank recalls, "so I told him to come to talk to us at the company, and we hired him. Later, I joked that I just didn't want to lose a good tenor from the church choir!"

Working with consultant Dr. Alexander Silverman from the University of Pittsburgh, Goe learned quickly about glassmaking. He was involved with the development of new transparent and opaque colors, and he also worked on opalescent glass batches and techniques for making Vasa Murrhina glass treatments.

When Frank M. Fenton wanted the company to re-create some of the interesting nineteenth century glass colors, Goe began a long series of experiments with various formulations for opaque pink glass, opaque brown glass, and Burmese glass.

After years of trials, Goe finally perfected a glass batch containing gold and uranium which produced the yellow Burmese which shaded to pink when reheated. Tragically, he died of a heart attack in October, 1969, shortly after sharing his success with Bill Fenton. "Charley's last experience here was joyous," Bill remembers. "He was so excited and delighted at what he had achieved."

Burmese has been one of the most popular and collectible of Fenton's colors since its introduction nearly three decades ago.



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F E N T O N

Collector's  
Card #15



*Williamstown, WV*  
UNITE!



The American Flint Glass Workers Union has a long and proud tradition. Currently enrolling some 17,500 glassworkers, the AFGWU has more than 125 local union chapters in about 30 states.

Efforts to organize glassworkers predate the Civil War, and regional groups existed in the 1860s. On July 1, 1878, some 33 delegates from various cities met in Conaway's Hall on Pittsburgh's South Side to create a national organization. R. A. Steen of Pittsburgh was the first president.

The union's initial objective was to standardize working conditions and wages among glass tableware plants in various locations. A constitution and by-laws were adopted, and local unions formed. In 1883, a contest regarding differences in work rules at Pittsburgh and Ohio Valley tableware plants led to recognition of the union by the manufacturers.

Annual conventions were held, and a Death Benefit Fund program was instituted. By 1895, the AFGWU had 7300 members. The union's offices were moved to Toledo, Ohio, in 1904, and the headquarters of the American Flint Glass Workers Union remains there today. In November, 1909, the first issue of the AFGWU's monthly publication, *The American Flint*, appeared.

On January 5, 1907, AFGWU Local Union No. 22 was chartered for the skilled glassworkers and mouldmakers at the Fenton Art Glass Company. Local Union No. 508, established in the 1930s when the national AFGWU expanded its ranks, enrolls all other Fenton employees who work directly with the glass or support the glassmaking operations in any way—hot metal (such as warming-in or carrying over); selecting; cold metal bench hands and finishing; decorating and sandcarving; and packing, shipping and maintenance.

Fenton managers work closely with Local Unions 22 and 508 in a program called C. I. Q. (Continuous Improvement in Quality).



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F E N T O N

Collector's  
Card #16



Royal Purple 6½" pitcher; 3-pc. fairy light; 9½" vase; 6½" round perfume bottle with stopper; and 8" basket.

These were made during 1998 only and were limited to 2950 pieces each.



Fenton's initial piece in Royal Purple was an amphora-style vase on a brass stand in the 1995 Connoisseur Collection. A Royal Purple covered box was sold as part of the Heirloom Collection on QVC in 1997.

The response to these pieces led Fenton to produce Royal Purple as an Historic Color for 1998. Royal Purple proved to be very popular with collectors, as the rich hue had great appeal to those who appreciate fine glass.

This glass color has a long and intriguing history, dating back to the first glassblowers in northern Italy in the first century, B. C. The color itself is associated with royalty, so it is not surprising that the glassblowers found their wealthy patrons eager for the wares they created.

Fenton's Royal Purple, like cranberry glass, contains pure gold in the batch and must be made as blown ware. The production of Royal Purple requires numerous workers, and a shop making baskets may have as many as 28 in various phases of the operation.

A "bud" from a roll of gold ruby glass is covered with a layer of cobalt blue before the glass is reheated and blown to the desired shape in a mould. A skilled glassworker called a handler applies the attractive crystal handles to pitchers or baskets.

The Colonial Scroll decoration, inspired by a ceiling medallion at a South Carolina plantation, was designed by Frances Burton. The simple flowers reflect the stylized concepts of the Colonial period in America.

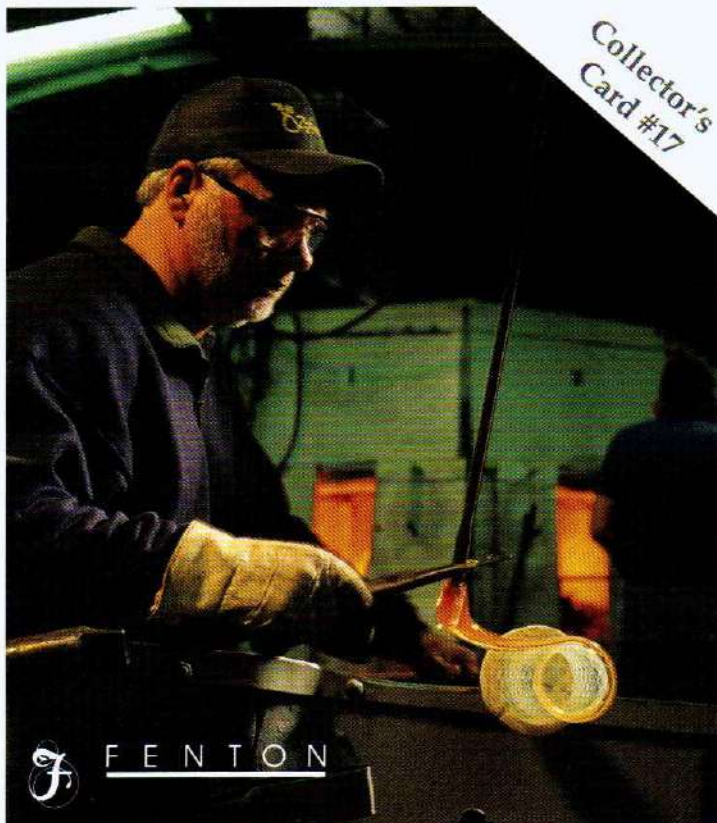


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Collector's  
Card #17



Ringer Butch Wright concentrates as he spins a ring of contrasting colored glass onto a partially-finished item. This operation requires both dexterity and teamwork.

The artistry of Fenton glass has several distinguishing features, but the edge of applied glass (usually in color) is among the best known among collectors today. The story behind this treatment goes back nearly three-quarters of a century.

Some of the off-hand art glass items made at Fenton in the mid-1920s display a cobalt blue edge. These pieces were made by a shop of European workers who soon left Fenton's employ, but Pete Raymond, a skilled glassworker at Fenton, had worked with them and observed their techniques.

About 1938, Raymond put cobalt blue "rings" on French Opalescent glass with a spiral optic, and the now-famous Blue Ridge line was born! As other glassworkers mastered the ringing technique, Fenton launched a succession of products using the term "crest." Many of the names are self-descriptive (such as Emerald Crest, Gold Crest and Aqua Crest, and one can easily imagine these colors as an edge on milk glass. About 1949, the Snow Crest line consisted of a milk glass edge on pieces of colored glass (amber, cranberry or dark green).

In the 1940s, Fenton created Silver Crest (milk glass with a crystal edge), and this treatment was exceptionally popular for several decades. The 1999 Fenton line includes a decorated motif called Morning Mist on Silver Crest glass.

One cannot bring any two glass colors together with the ringing operation. The colors must "match" in their rates of contraction as they slowly cool to room temperature. Fenton chemists are often working on changes in glass batches so that contrasting colors can be matched to create pleasing combinations.



**F E N T O N**

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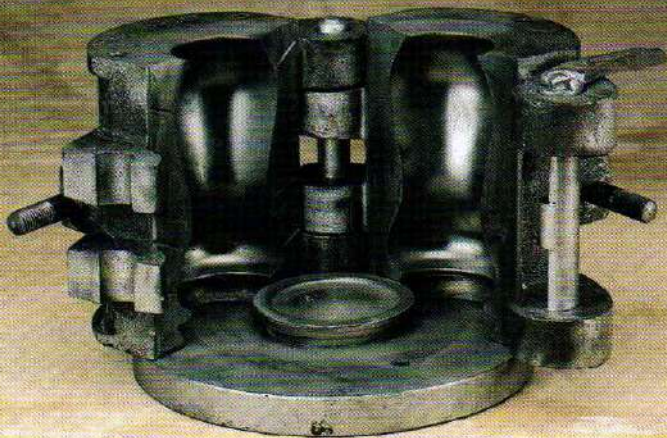
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FENTON

Collector's  
Card #18



Except for a few off-hand items, all Fenton glass is made in moulds which impart the shape and, often, a distinctive pattern to the molten glass. The typical manufacturing methods are pressing or blowing, and the photo above shows a "blow mould," used in making both vases and baskets.

Made of cast iron, blow moulds like this one must open and close readily as each piece is made, but the two halves must fit together tightly so that the seams or joints are not too visible on the glass. It may take from six months to a year before a designer's idea can become a finished mould. During that period, Fenton's skilled mouldmakers will have spent many hours shaping, finishing and polishing the mould.

Moulds are large and heavy. This blow mould weighs about 60 pounds. Some of Fenton's smallest moulds weigh just 8-10 pounds, but the moulds for punch bowls or large lighting fixtures weigh hundreds of pounds each! The interior surfaces of the mould which contact the glass must be clean and well-polished so that the finished product lacks obvious imperfections.

Before it can be used in glassmaking, a mould must be pre-heated in a mould oven. Special heat-resistant lubricants assure that the mould will open and close and that the glass will not stick to the mould. After each four-hour shift (called a "turn" in the glass industry), the moulds are allowed to cool slowly before they are inspected for excessive wear or damage and cleaned.

Properly used and maintained, a mould will last for many years. Since a new mould represents an investment of \$10,000 or more, it's important to take good care of them! Fenton has more than 8000 moulds, and only a few of them are in use at a given time.



F E N T O N

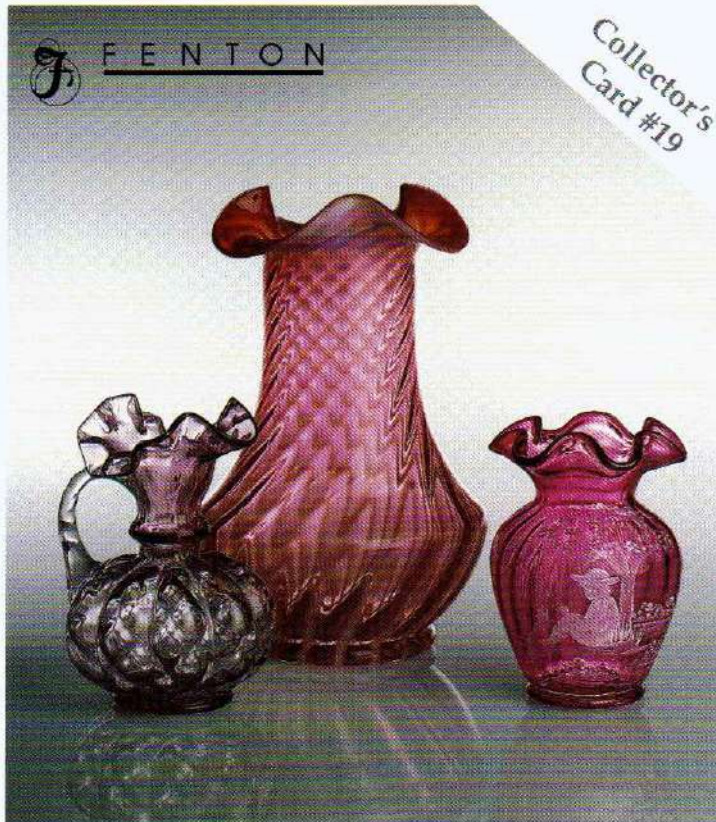
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FENTON

Collector's  
Card #19



Ruby Overlay diamond optic handled jug (1942-48); Cranberry Red 10" spiral optic triangle vase (c. 1939-40); and cranberry 5" vase with Mary Gregory-style "fishing boy" decoration (1999).



For more than 50 years, Fenton's cranberry glass has been a popular collectible. Made with pure gold in the batch, this color must be made as blown ware, but it can be manufactured with a wide variety of optic or opalescent effects.

In the late 1930s, Fenton catalogs pictured items in "Cranberry Red." Collectors call these Cranberry Opalescent today, and many feature a vivid spiral optic treatment. In the early 1940s, Fenton marketed "Ruby Overlay" items, usually with a diamond optic; these were popular for over three decades. In 1947, an opalescent treatment called Coin Dot was introduced, and it, too, was in the Fenton line for a number of years.

A new line, dubbed Country Cranberry, was developed in 1981 and went into the Fenton catalogs the next year. Decorations on cranberry glass began in the mid-1980s with items in Fenton's Connoisseur Collection. Frances Burton's Pansies on Cranberry has been in the Fenton line since 1995, and the Mary Gregory-style decorations developed by Martha Reynolds and Diane Gessel are now popular Fenton limited edition items.

Cranberry glass begins when a special solution containing pure gold is added to the glass batch. "Ruby rolls" are made from this batch, and, as they are later re-heated, the rich color begins to form. A small ruby "bud" is covered with a layer of crystal (or French opalescent if this effect is desired) before the glass is warmed-in once more and, finally, blown to the desired shape in a mould. A skilled glassworker called a finisher may complete the piece by shaping or crimping its topmost edge.

The production of cranberry glass is quite labor intensive, and a shop making cranberry baskets may number as high as 27 or 28 workers.



F E N T O N

*Handcrafted Glass Artistry Since 1905*

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F E N T O N

Collector's  
Card #20



From the Fenton Connoisseur Collection: Royal Purple amphora with brass stand (1995, limited to 890); Queen's Bird Burmese 11" vase (1996, limited to 1350); and French opalescent Tranquility 8" vase (1997, limited to 1500).

Since 1983, some of the finest examples of glass artistry from Fenton can be found in the yearly Connoisseur Collection. Many of the Connoisseur Collection pieces reflect the colors or styles of art glass from yesteryear, and others represent the zenith of Fenton's design ideas, glassmaking techniques and decorating skills. The Connoisseur Collection pieces are unique, ranging from cased glass, iridized glass or heat-sensitive glass to handpainted decorations or sandcarving.

Connoisseur Collection pieces are limited editions, and they are individually numbered. Each item is specially packaged in an attractive box and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.

There is a story behind every Connoisseur Collection piece. Robin Spindler's Tranquility vase, with its rich colors and bright 22k gold, was recognized with an Award of Excellence from *Collector Editions* magazine. The dramatic Queens Bird vase features Martha Reynolds' stylized bird and floral decoration highlighted with 22k gold. The Royal Purple amphora also bears a Martha Reynolds' decoration—realistic cherries accented with gold and ivory.

The number of items in the Connoisseur Collection varies from year to year. Just two items were made in 1987, but the typical offering contains 7 to 9 different articles. Sometimes the emphasis is on special colors (such as Burmese, Cranberry or Favrene) or a revival of an important glassmaking technique (such as Vasa Murrhina or Amberina). Many items feature exquisite handpainted decorations designed by a member of Fenton's award-winning decorating department.

The annual Connoisseur Collection makes its debut in June, when a mid-year catalog supplement is distributed to Fenton dealers.



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F E N T O N

Collector's  
Card #21



This 7¼" vase, called Blue Harmony, is the Fenton Glass Messenger subscriber exclusive for 1999. The French opalescent glass has an extraordinary satin finish and a subtle iridescence. The handpainted decoration was designed by Frances Burton and Martha Reynolds, and the vase is inscribed with the signature of company Vice-President Don Fenton.

Each year, subscribers to the Glass Messenger newsletter have the opportunity to purchase a special piece of Fenton glass that is available only to them. A personal purchase voucher (automatically included with the June, 1999, issue of the Glass Messenger) must be presented to a Fenton retailer by December 31, 1999, to order this piece.

This is the fourth Glass Messenger subscriber exclusive. The previous pieces were as follows: Roselle on Cranberry basket (1996); French Rose on Rosalene vase (1997); and Morning Glories on Burmese tulip vase (1998).

The Glass Messenger is a quarterly publication (March, June, September and December), filled with full-color illustrations of Fenton glass and the people who produce it. Since its inception in 1996, each issue of the Glass Messenger has spotlighted important Fenton products and revealed the behind-the-scenes stories that make Fenton products so unique and Fenton glass artisans so interesting.

Collectors have enjoyed learning about many different subjects: Fenton's recreations of nineteenth-century art glass colors; step-by-step illustrations of glassmaking processes and techniques; and historic glass from Fenton's own past.

Glass Messenger subscribers are among the first to learn of new Fenton glass colors and products, such as family signature pieces and the annual Connoisseur Collection. A regular column, "Ask Clarence," responds to collectors' questions about glassmaking generally and Fenton glass in particular.

To subscribe to the Glass Messenger, call 1-800-249-4527 (or 304-375-6122 if outside the US).



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