

Heisey's Opaque and Opalescent Glass

Great Plains Heisey Club, September, 2017

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Heisey's opaque glass has something for all levels of collectors. Some pieces are easy to find, and some are rare prizes for any collection. Relatively few patterns were made in opaque colors, but most of them were popular sellers for the company. The opalescent colors, on the other hand, are very limited, both in the color range and in the availability of pieces.

Heisey is known to have made two opaque colors, Opal (white) and Ivorina Verde (custard). There is some evidence that they also made a third opaque color, blue, for use on a table set in pattern #180. Unfortunately, we do not know what #180 looked like. It was probably an EAPG type of pattern, since it was numbered in the series that includes #150 Pointed Oval in Diamond Point, #160 Locket on Chain, and the re-numbered #170 Cut Block. It probably would have been light to medium blue, rather than deep blue.

Opalescent glass, where only the edge was opaque, was made in crystal and Canary (vaseline). Quantities were very limited, judging from availability today.

Opaque and opalescent glass were made in the late 1890's but were mainly discontinued by about 1906. Souvenir custard pieces may have been made longer.

Later, Emmet Olson, the Heisey chemist, occasionally experimented with opaque colors. Specifically, he is known to have worked with Opal in the 1940's. As late as 1954 he made Moonstone. Moonstone is something like translucent opal, almost clear with white coming from within. Goblets in #5092 Empress Lily exist with Moonstone stems.

When the company sold its assets to Imperial, Heisey included color recipes. These represented all the transparent colors starting with Moongleam and Flamingo all the way through to the late colors of the 1950's, but not the colors from the turn of the century. All but one were production colors. But among the recipes that Imperial got was one for yellow

opal. This is the glassmakers' term for custard. (The industry called any opaque color an opal, so opal came in all sorts of colors. Custard was just one.) Just maybe, at the very end, Heisey was considering making custard glass once again.

Opal. Heisey Opal is stark, cold white, but when held to light usually will have fiery pinkish tones, especially near the edges or where the glass is thin. This effect may not appear in some pieces with thick glass. Under ultraviolet light, most Opal is nearly dead, but if the UV light is strong enough, a very dull salmon pink glow with yellowish overtones can be seen. A few pieces of Opal glow with pale uranium green but this is uncommon.

Opal is found in these patterns, and others are possible:

- #1295 Bead Swag, the most common color for this pattern. All pieces of the pattern came in Opal.
- #1280 Winged Scroll can be found in Opal, but the color is hard to find in this pattern. The trays, the smoking pieces, and the vanity pieces were made in Opal, but possibly not other pieces.
- The early Sweet Scroll novelties were probably always in Opal; all are hard to find.
- #1255 Pineapple and Fan souvenir creams are hard to find in Opal.
- #1220 Puntty Band souvenir pieces have been seen in Opal.
- Some pieces of #310 Ring Band, particularly some tumblers, may be Opal, but some or all of these may be very pale ivory. See below under Ivorina Verde.
- The #1235 Beaded Panel and Sunburst punch bowl and foot are known in Opal.
- One table set of #160 Locket on Chain is known in Opal.
- There is possibly a piece of #305 Puntty and Diamond Point in Opal.

Ivorina Verde. Usually called custard by collectors. In the few factory price lists of this period that we have, Heisey usually just called this color Ivory. But they did call it Ivorina Verde at least once when advertising Winged Scroll. The color can vary considerably, from rich buttery yellow or greenish ivory to very pale ivory, all the way to a warm white almost indistinguishable from Opal. Some collectors have attempted to divide pieces between Ivorina Verde (darker) and Ivory (paler), but there is really a continuum of shades that makes drawing any precise border between them all but impossible. All Ivorina Verde of whatever shade has uranium in it and will glow bright uranium green under UV. The intensity of the UV reaction doesn't seem to differ with the shade under natural light: pale, nearly white pieces glow just as strongly as rich yellow ones. Note that some other companies made custard glass using cadmium, which would not glow under UV in the same way as uranium-based custard glass. The "yellow opal" recipe Heisey sold to Imperial was cadmium-based.

Ivorina Verde is found in these patterns, with the possibility for others:

- #310 Ring Band. Almost all pieces of this pattern are in this color. The shade can vary from buttery yellow to very pale ivory to warm white.
- #1280 Winged Scroll is common in Ivorina Verde and all pieces were made in this color. Shade can vary from medium ivory to rich greenish ivory.
- #341 Puritan sherbets are known in Ivorina Verde but are very rare.
- #1235 Beaded Panel and Sunburst punch bowl and foot are known.

Souvenir pieces are often found in Ivorina Verde. Many of these appear to have been made later than general production for Ivorina Verde, and many are very deep yellow custard, deeper than the general-use patterns listed above. Patterns in Ivorina Verde used for souvenirs include these:

- #1200 Cut Block individual creams and sugars.
- #1220 Plain Band and #1225 Punt Band, such as toothpicks, sugars and creams, mugs and tumblers.

- #8047 Cane and Bar tankard creams. (HCA-assigned number; actual Heisey number is probably #6; sometimes incorrectly placed in #315 Paneled Cane.)
- #1255 Pineapple and Fan tankard creams.
- #7053 Beaded Line creams. Usually not marked. Sometimes attributed to Jefferson Glass Co. (Vogel-assigned number; probably Heisey #8.)
- Custard cups, plain, identified either as #1101 Stitch or #1155 Gibbs
- #1295 Bead Swag goblets and wines (the only pieces in this pattern usually found in Ivorina Verde, and much easier to find than in Opal).

Opalescence. For our purposes, this means transparent glass, crystal or colored, with edges or high points in opaque white. (Other types of glass with much different appearance are also called opalescent, but Heisey did not make them.) Our kind of opalescence was created by adding certain ingredients to the batch. (Heisey probably used arsenic or tin for theirs.) After a piece was moulded, it was cooled slightly and then partially reheated. The reheated parts turned white. Heisey made for production only Canary and crystal with opalescence, and both are very hard to find. No price list is known which lists opalescence, but that does not mean early examples were experimental.

Canary opalescence has been seen in #1255 Pineapple and Fan and #1280 Winged Scroll and also in Plaid vases.

Crystal opalescence has been seen in #1220 Punt Band, #1295 Bead Swag, #300 Peerless, and #357 Prison Stripe.

Gold opalescence was experimental. This seems unrelated to the Gold shade of Mari-gold. The museum owns a pair of #114 Pluto candlesticks in this color. One of the Bredehoft books illustrates two more candlesticks, #1205 Raindrop and #112 Mercury, in the same color. These were probably made around 1930.