

American Art Deco and Moderne Glass, Etches and Decorates

I can think of at least 24 different glass companies that made Art Deco or Modern glass from the late 1920's through the 1950's. Glass from this era can be found in three different forms. The first form has the Art Deco/Moderne design molded into the glass, the 2nd form has the design etched into the glass and the 3rd form features the glass decorated with gold, silver or enamel paint.

The Consolidated Glass Company produced the most sought after and highly popular Art Deco pattern of all time, Ruba Rombic. Ruba Rombic was made by pouring glass into a metal mold. The Ruba Rombic line itself is relatively small consisting mostly of bowls, bottles, plates, tumblers and vases. The decanter is the most coveted piece in the line. The design of the decanter was so unique that the company applied for and was granted a patent for the design. Ruba Rombic can be found in numerous colors with Smokey Topaz and Jungle Green the easiest colors to find. The 8" plate is the most common and it is also the least expensive piece. Prices for Ruba Rombic range from \$75 to \$12,000 depending on the color and rarity of the piece.

The New Martinsville Glass Company also produced a very popular triangular shaped pattern called Modernistic which was made using a metal mold. There are 12 items in the line with creamers/sugars and the vase being the easiest to find. Modernistic was made in several colors, many of which were frosted. The large console bowl, perfume, and the night jug with handle are on most collector's want list. Prices for Modernistic are very reasonable with the exception of the console bowl, perfume and night jug.

The Kopp Glass Company also offered a Modernistic line that consisted of only three pieces also produced using a metal mold. The line consisted of a covered box, vase and electric lamp. All three pieces are commonly misidentified as Ruba Rombic and priced accordingly. The covered box is the easiest of the three pieces to find with the lamp being extremely hard to find. It might even be considered rare. Kopp Modernistic may be found in frosted green, blue, brown and red.

The Morgantown Glass Company made molded and etched Art Deco patterns. Some of the most sought after patterns that the company produced are the Courtney and Square stemware lines. The design for both lines contains a hollow square molded directly into the middle of the stem. The lines are differentiated by the shape of the bowl. The stem of each line is molded and the bowl of the goblet is blown by a worker and then attached to the stem while still hot. The Art Moderne and Pyragon lines are probably the most recognized Art Deco stemware lines that the company produced, with the Art Moderne stems being the easiest to locate. The company is also famous for its wonderful Art Deco etches and the colorful names given to them. Names such as: Artic, Athena, Aurora, Faun, LeMons, Nasreen, Superba and others. The etching process was labor intensive requiring the company to manufacture the pattern on metal etching plates which were designed for each piece of glass to be etched. The glass was then covered in wax and the metal plates were then attached and removed so the pattern was transferred to the glass. The metal plates removed the wax leaving the surface of the glass exposed. The glass was

then dipped into acid which etched the pattern onto the glass. The glass was then removed from the acid and the wax cleaned off and the piece was fire polished. Gold, silver or different colored enamels were used to enhance etches.

The Fry Glass Company was made famous because of its opalescent oven ware which was used in the kitchens of a lot of homes. They also made a limited amount of Art Deco glass. One of the most sought after pieces of Art Deco glassware is the Fry Cactus goblet. This goblet was named after the Saguaro cactus of the southern desert of the US and Mexico. The Cactus goblet has three arms that curve up at the top of the stem. The area directly below the arms is hollow. The design was so intricate the company applied for and was granted a patent by the federal government. The company also made an eight sided Art Deco stemware line. An excellent example of the Saguaro pattern, a signed R. H. Haley light blue sherbet, is on display at the Kirkland Museum in Denver.

The Abels, Waserberg & Co. (AWCO) was a decorating company that never made their own glass. They purchased blank(plain) glass from other companies and then decorated the glass and sold it under the name of the Charleton. The designs produced by the Charleton company were mostly designs using flowers in them. They did however produce several modern designs that are sought after. One of the most unique and unusual designs is the "Dapple" decoration. Its design consists of using a dark aqua blue background with gold paint sponged on in the shape of small dots. The piece is further accented by a metallic gold band highlighted with loops of white enamel paint. Dapple decorated Charleton pieces are extremely hard to find. Dapple decorated pieces remind me of the famous Dot paintings of Vance Kirkland.

The companies mentioned in this article are just a few of the great American glass companies that made beautiful and artistic glass. There are well over a hundred different patterns, etches and decorates that fall into the Art Deco and Moderne era.

The Rocky Mountain Depression Glass Society has over 100 books in our extensive library available to help you with researching glass and pottery. If you are interested in learning more about American made glass from the 1920's to the 1960's you might attend a meeting of the Rocky Mt. Depression Glass Society. Meetings are held monthly on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM at Epiphany Lutheran Church, 790 S. Corona.

The Kirkland Museum in Denver has many examples of the glass mentioned in this article. The museum also contains hundreds of other interesting and beautiful art objects ranging from Kirkland paintings, to furniture, pottery, arts/crafts, prints and much more. I highly recommend that you visit the museum. The Kirkland Museum is located at 1311 Pearl St., Denver, Co. 80203 (303) 832-8404.