Carnival Glass That Lights Up

A few months ago, our friend Serge Beaudin found a Fenton Leaf & Chain 6" cobalt blue bowl. In itself, this is nothing to titillate a long-time collector. Our Questioner, examining this piece, went through it automatically with his ultraviolet light. To his surprise, the piece reacted in the same way as a Vaseline bowl it lights up! You can read his article in the AVCQ journal 156 on this subject.

Photo article de Serge J 156

This finding brought back to my mind that I also had a piece that reacted this way. My curiosity led me to look for it. Quickly passing the magical light, I spotted the piece, a Fenton cobalt blue Stag and Holly bowl with spatula feet. It really lights up.

On the strength of these two elements, we chose to make it a meeting topic to deepen this particular reaction for pieces that presented this particularity. The rumor about these rare pieces is that there may have been some residue from a batch of Vaseline glass on the bottom of the production vessel and that is why some pieces light up a bit.

For this first meeting after two years without seeing each other face-to-face, it was important, in order to allow us to fraternize as much as possible, to have a theme that

would be popular due to the low number of pieces expected. The members were therefore invited to turn off the lights in their apartment at night (very important) and to carefully pass the magic lamp to look for pieces that light up other than those recognized as Vaseline.

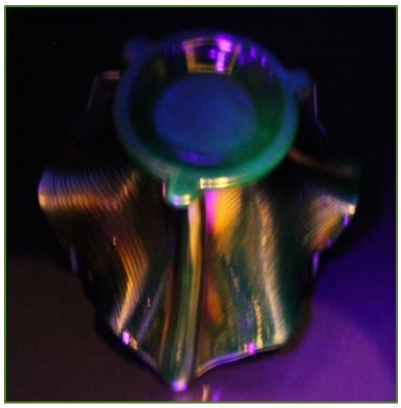
I've always been told that when a carnival piece is Vaseline, there is no need for black light, you can see the color just at first glance. There are however cases where the iridescence completely hides the glass and the light makes all the difference. These blue pieces or other colors are not necessarily Vaseline pieces but arouse a certain interest.

WOW! Everyone who did the research was amazed and the word is weak. Not all of the finds were brought to the meeting, but there were still about 30 pieces. Most were from Fenton, Northwood and Imperial. Very few finds for other companies. An orange Butterfly and Tulip from Dugan and some pieces from Europe.

Northwood

Peacocks Northwood

Several cobalt blue pieces from this company were presented, such as two Drapery pattern pieces, a vase and a candy dish, a Beaded Cable rose bowl, and a standard Tree Trunk vase. You could admire a beautiful Northwood pastel marigold Peacocks bowl flashing all over the place. A few other marigold pieces from this company flashed on the legs and edges.



Drapery Northwood

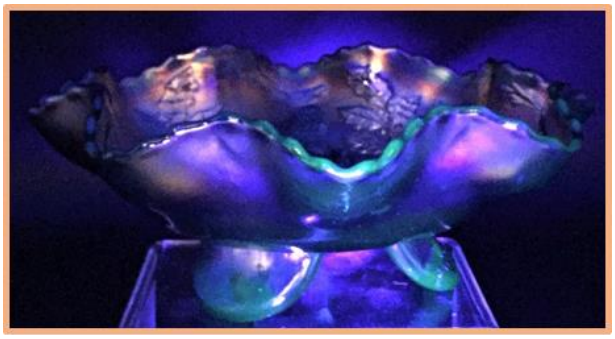
Even though it is difficult to take a picture, we are inserting a few to help visualize this phenomenon.

Grape and Gothic Arches Northwood

The biggest surprise is a creamer from the Grape and Gothic Arches table set that lights up when all the other pieces in the set do not react in any way!

Fenton

It is known that this company produced a lot of Vaseline-colored carnival glass. It would have been normal for this phenomenon to be more present for this company than the others. This is not the case, however. The pieces found were some cobalt blue Water Lily, Peacock and Urn, Cherry Chain, Stag & Holly pieces and a small Open Edge basket.



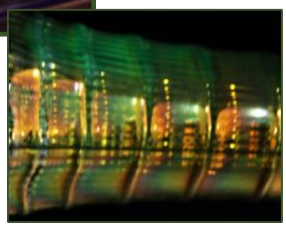
Stag and Holly Fenton

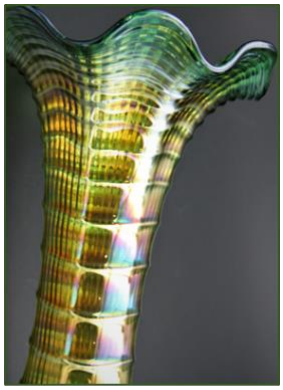
Imperial

Hobstrar flowers Imperial

For Imperial, it was mainly the green and helios pieces (not only these) which reacted to contact with the rays of the ultraviolet lamp. Pieces shown are Miniature Morning Glory Vases, Rippel, Parlor Panels, Heavy Grape Serving Plate, Scroll Embossed Plate, Hobstar Flower Fruit Bowl, Imperial Grape Fruit Set. It is likely that many other patterns of this color react in the same way.

I have 2 sets of Imperial Six-Sided marigold candlesticks that react a bit, but a similar set at our meeting was totally unresponsive.





Rippel Imperial

What to think of this observation...

It is important to specify that all my pieces (10) react in the same way to an ultraviolet neon and to flashlights of different powers. This check removes the likelihood of flashlights distorting reality.

On the volume of pieces in the collections covered by our research, we find that about 3% of carnival that is not Vaseline color reacts to ultraviolet rays. I also believe that the theory of the remainder of residue in the production vessel of the day before does not hold water due to the large number and the variety of patterns and shapes found. This theory is however plausible for a very small number showing a weak reaction.

I think uranium was part of some recipes to enrich the brightness of glass or some other component might explain this reaction to ultraviolet light. Some might believe that these are minerals contained in recipes to produce iridescence (dope); I don't think so, since it is often the bottom of the piece that is not iridescent that reacts with intensity. It's not on the surface.

The challenge is on, turn off your lights, pull out your ultraviolet lamp and thoroughly check the pieces in your collection (not just passing quickly through your showcases) and you will certainly be as amazed as those who participated in our experiment.

Fine Rib Fenton bleu

Experts will certainly find a plausible explanation for this state of affairs. Perhaps collectors will specialize in collecting pieces that show this characteristic even if the impact on price is insignificant at the moment. For the moment, we rarely see the mention "Glow under black light" in auctions, which would be a plus for buyers interested in acquiring pieces that have this characteristic.

Good research

Jacques Dugas

December 2021

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