



DICHROME

BY CHRIS JETTER

Body modification on your rod, or kustom, has evolved from lead work and lacquer primer to Tig welding and composite polymer filler and primers delivering perfect body lines and mirror-finish paint jobs. Polished brass eventually gave way to gold plating, chrome, and then billet. Now we're moving beyond polished aluminum to accents that will shine in the imagination of every flameworker who is into old cars.

As a glassworking car aficionado, you may think you've seen and heard it all on the car show circuit, the cool nights cruising the automotive Internet sites, or long hours in the garage listening to your buddies, but there is a revolution on the horizon. You know rolled pans. You know chopped tops. You know T & R interiors and sculpted leather. You don't even blink when someone speaks of a TPI motor built to the hilt because you are a car buff. But have you heard about the latest accents that are available in borosilicate?

The revolution is here. You'll be teaching your car-loving buddies a whole new vocabulary with words like "wig-wag" and "3-D vortex." Don't forget "galaxy marble" and "latticino twists." There are even "complex mil-lifiore." You'll be explaining color-changing exhaust tips. What about a set of silver and gold-fumed Lakes Pipes with monster mouth tips and dichro stripes? Soon, silver and gold fuming and complex dichro patterns will underscore their new vocabulary. It will be the talk of the revolution—the glass accent revolution—and the company bringing it to you is Dichrome, which was established in April of 2003 after the Feds handed out the fifty-one indictments to the pipe guys.

At the time I was running a website called Chronicshops.com, an online magazine dedicated to the pipe and head shop industry. I was living in Grants Pass, Oregon, learning the art of glassblowing from one the very best, Darby Holm. When I had been in Eugene, Oregon, a short time earlier doing an article on the Hempfest for Chronicshops.com, Darby was kind enough to agree to teach me how to blow glass.

After shooting an exclusive with Darby I hustled home, sold my house, packed all my stuff in my 1959 Cadillac, and moved to Grants Pass. To this day I'm not sure if he really expected me to show up from four states away, and yet there I was!



THE NEW AUTO ACCESSORY





LEFT: 1959 CADILLAC TAILLIGHT LENSES BY DARBY HOLM. OWNER, CRIS JETTER.

RIGHT: 1954 CADILLAC TURN SIGNAL, AIR CLEANER HOLD-DOWN, AND SHIFT KNOB BY CRIS JETTER

BELOW: 1957 CHEVY KUSTOM HINT OF MINT SHIFT KNOB COLABORATION BY DARBY HOLM AND CRIS JETTER



I had absolutely no experience other than having a Lynx torch that I crashed and burned on once in a while. For just about a year I stayed in Grants Pass and slowly learned the trade. It took me some time to get the hang of it despite the fact that I was spending eight to ten hours a day in the shop and had a extremely talented artist to instruct me. In 2003 the indictments were handed out in Operation Pipe Dreams. Nobody wanted any articles on those artists or a listing of their shops posted on the Web anymore, and who could blame them? All of the major players that we sold glass to were in trouble, and everyone else put a stop on business as usual. Essentially I had just lost two jobs in one day and found myself in Grants Pass, Oregon, far away from home with no income and an uncertain future. I immediately shut down the site and began to contemplate the future.

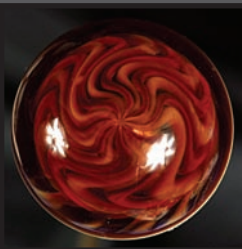
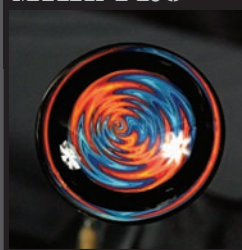
I had been in the pipe business for nearly fifteen years and had survived a similar bust in Colorado at the Invitational Bong-a-Thon—another long story. I had decided that I wanted to get away from pipes, and yet I didn't want to cut my ties with all my new friends and the new glass skills that Darby was gracious enough to teach me. I moved back to Denver with a new vision of automotive accessories to complement one of America's oldest and fondest hobbies, playing with cars—a hobby that had been in my family for over fifty years. Eventually I developed Dichrome, a compound

word using "dichro" and "chrome." Dichrome, like its name, is a compound of intuitive artists with a new vision for the art of automotive glass accessories that was developed after four years of hard work and a lot of trials and tribulations. There was also tons of help from many artists with more talent, knowledge, and skills than I have alone. All of that went together to make up Dichrome, Inc., and yes, we are looking for new artists.

Dichrome, at the forefront of the glass accent revolution, specializes in handblown automotive glass accessories and currently offers a complete line of gearshift knobs, air cleaner hold downs, and door locks, along with a never-ending capacity for custom applications to boggle your mind. We believe in our motto: "Your imagination is Dichrome's only limit!"

Borosilicate glass is what Dichrome uses to fashion these custom accents. The company uses this exceptionally durable glass—the strongest glass on earth next to pure quartz—by employing only the very best borosilicate artists in the world. Together, the promise of an array of automotive accessories exists that you've never seen before including, but not limited to: color changing exhaust tips that actually turn purple and blue the more you drive, glass wiper tower covers, dashboard knobs, and for low riders, hydraulic switch covers. Shift knobs, air cleaner hold-downs, glass valve stem covers, door locks, and handblown taillight lenses are among the pieces that will astound,



ERIK ANDERS**DARBY HOLM****MIKE FRO****CHRIS JETTER****EUSHEEN GOINES**

pieces already being used on some vehicles like Jesse James' Monster Garage, diesel-powered trike. Flat glass interior inserts—matched in any color including pearls, metal flakes, and color-shifting chameleon paints—through a line of color-shifting dichro glass coatings are the newest and wildest stuff for accenting your vehicle.

That word that we mentioned earlier—dichro—comes from “dichroism,” which is the property of crystals and solutions absorbing one of two plane-polarized components of transmitted light more strongly than the other. It also means the property of exhibiting different colors by reflected or transmitted light. Dichro is a multilayered, iridescent coating applied to glass using a vacuum process. Quartz crystal and metal oxides are vaporized by an electron beam, which causes the charged vapor to float and condense onto a glass surface. Dichroic coatings can have as many as thirty layers, yet the total thickness is only about thirty-five millionths of an inch.

Originally created for the aerospace industry as a coating for satellite panels and now created as accents for your rod or kustom, dichro possesses a reflective color unique from visible color. This exotic property creates color shifts that change with light and viewing angle. Each coating will transmit a different color; depending on the electromagnetic field in the vacuum chamber during coating. This alone determines the color shift. Glass that is coated red, green, and gold, for instance, will reflect one of the three different colors depending on the viewing angle of the glass in the light. This property makes paint matching of pearls, metal flakes, and even chameleon finishes possible. In addition, Dichrome can laser-etch an image into the dichro—flames, pinstripes, year, make, model of your vehicle. Even custom artwork generated by the customer can be laser imaged. The possibilities are endless.

Suffice it to say, the revolution is here, and as a car buff you owe it to yourself to check out [www. Dichrome.com](http://www.Dichrome.com) for yourself. You'll see a lathed glass radiator hose featuring a wig-wag reversal color pattern with an awesome lattachino-bodied dragon covered in striking amber scales and flapping gold-fumed wings. It's breathing lava orange and red cherry flames and staring at you from behind deep purple vortex eyes. That's correct. I said a *glass* radiator hose.

Are you ready for the revolution . . . **A GLASS REVOLUTION?**

www.Dichrome.com

FLOW

**ADAM GRAFUIS****CHRIS RICE**