

Fantastic Faceting

Written by Thomas Bakert

Photos by Michael Lewis

Materials:

6-7mm clear rod
Amazon Night by Glass Alchemy
approx 8mm diameter

Tools:

Carbon paddle
Marvering surface
Faceting machine
The self righteous



I first became interested in faceting glass 3 years ago when I saw these beautiful leaflets with some of Jesse Taj and Jared DeLong's work hanging up in the Glass House in Arcata, CA. I was instantly curious. There was nothing I could do about it, that day. I had caught the fever and... well, after a lot of hard work and guided by the advice I had been given generously by Jesse, I was able to make enough sense out of the cold work process to begin making a beautiful mess. Much like anything new ventured in glass it took time and effort to get my ideas fine-tuned. Personally, I consider this type of work a labor of love, so of course it's worth it. Have fun experimenting and finding out how faceting fits into your style.

Hot Work



Begin with a section of color about 1" long attached to a clear handle. Draw 2 or 3 lines down the color with clear. **Tips:** By warming the color section before adding the clear will give the piece different characteristics resulting in more contrasting colors and defined patterns in the final mix.



Attach an additional handle to the end of your exposed section of color, heat and twist to mix the entire length into something you think will look good as an arrowhead. The shape you are looking for here should resemble a football.



Next, gather up the right side of the mixed color section. This will end up being the top of the arrowhead. Afterwards when the piece is finished, a loop can easily be attached to turn your work into an extremely attractive centerpiece of a necklace arrangement.



Now start heating the left hand side of the section and as the glass becomes fluid begin pulling and stretching this area gradually working your way down to the area you wish to separate. The shape of our section should now resemble a cone. There are many possibilities for different shapes at this point. Use your imagination and experiment, then go with what you like. Personality brings out a piece and others will appreciate an honest effort.



The next step is to begin heating the piece concentrating the flame on the area with the greatest mass. This will allow you ample time while marvering. Be careful. Too little heat will leave you with a sloppy, labored and inconsistent marvering job while too much heat will tend to distort the shape and possibly make your piece flop around minimizing the control you will have while shaping.



After the piece has attained ample working temperature move it onto the marvering surface and give it 1 or 2 "good" presses. What I mean by "good" is an accurate and planned series of actions. Before even getting to the marvering stage you should already have a very good idea of how you want your piece to look and exactly the steps that need to be taken for you to accomplish what you have in mind. A good plan will save you lots of time.

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Once you've finished anneal the piece and let it cool. Now get ready to switch gears here, because what comes next has nothing to do with torches.

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The Studio is equipped with 10 torches, 6 of which are brand new Carlisle DC's for students' classes and rental time. We provide ample kiln space and a fun and relaxed learning environment. The studio is open to the public week day afternoons; feel free to stop in to see what we are all about. (Please call ahead to make sure that we are there. 215 222-7336)



Glass blowers can purchase:
NorthStar color and Symax tubing
and rod.

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1 Day Intro to Lampworking 1 - 5pm

Saturday October 9

1 Day Intro to Lampworking 1 - 5pm

Tuesday October 19

6 Week Intro to Lampworking 6 - 9pm

Wednesday October 20

6 Week Intermediate Lampworking 6 - 9pm

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Philadelphia Glass Works

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Cold Work

Helpful Hints

Have a real good plan before you get behind the wheel. Flying blind sometimes works, but for any real sense of symmetry a well thought out plan helps. One technique is to sketch the general shape and faceting arrangement with pencil and paper before grinding.

Work slowly and carefully running sufficient water and always wear eye protection.

Have fun. It helps.



I usually start off with the 100 mesh disk to facet the largest areas first and to obtain the general shape of the piece. The smaller facets (typically known as points) are done on the finest diamond wheel because the surface of the 100-mesh wheel is too abrasive and will chip the edges off of the finer points.



Example of how the piece looks after the first grinding.



After I have completed the major shaping I move to the 260 mesh diamond wheel going over previous facets to remove ridges left behind by previous wheel. Moving the piece around the wheel and using a lighter touch will avoid deep surface scratches and pattern from developing. This will cut down on the time it takes during the final polishing process.



Examples of how the piece looks after the second grinding.



Once you have finished getting the major faceting done the next step is to remove your handle. For this step I use a wet cutoff saw. Remember to wear eye protection because glass can go flying off during this step.



Now you can begin putting finer points in place with the 600 mesh disk giving the piece a very precise and defined arrangement of points. My arrowhead pendants usually have between 12-18 points.



The next step is to begin polishing the piece bringing out the potential brilliance behind the rough finish left by the diamond wheels. Using the 325 mesh smoothing disk start by polishing the largest surfaces first gradually buffing out the area resulting in a very, smooth, matte finish.



The final polishing is done using a felt wheel imbedded with Cerium Oxide. I run the wheel at 1-2 drops every 2 seconds with a fresh coat of Cerium Oxide applied.

The only way I was able to get the glass polished is because Jesse Taj told me to work each facet until it gets very warm. Since the arrowheads are so narrow, the piece will get quite warm before the polishing is finished. I've been told by others to run the felt wheel using more water. I discovered that I couldn't obtain the friction I needed to heat the piece into polishing. I also began throwing Cerium mix all over the place. You might want to enclose the area or do this step outside. Keep in mind this process does take a while. Plan on spending some time getting the piece fully polished. The end result is worth it.

I would like to dedicate this demonstration to my parents Thomas and Natalie Bakert. It's been over 8 long years of trial and error. Thank you for hanging in there with me.

For arrowheads and other jewelry inquiries contact Thomas Bakert at New Rising Sun Glass Studio 707-825-1027 or email bakerttom@aol.com.



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