

# Using Your Beadmaking Skills for Functional and Attractive Drawer Knobs

*Text and Demonstration by Susan Stortini*

*Photography by Morgan McGraw*

Your lampworking skills can create stunning and functional drawer pulls. The incredibly vast color palette combined with the expansion of the reactive 104 COE glass gives artists an entirely new vision to creativity. There are spectacular options for matching decor and creating special touches for home or building projects. Whether you're making one-of-a-kind pieces or a complete set, this is a fun and practical opportunity to use your skills as a lampworker.

The following tutorial will show you how the knob is formed. I chose a simple design and an effective technique for this example. All of the tools and materials used in this project, including the Nortel Mid-Range Plus torch pictured here, are available by contacting Jean at Nortel Manufacturing ([jean@nortelmfg.com](mailto:jean@nortelmfg.com)).

## Moretti/Effetre

072 Striking Transparent Orange

456 Gold Ruby (Rubino)

060 Transparent Cobalt Blue

038 Transparent Aqua

004 Clear

All glass 104 COE

## Tools and Materials

8/32" Threaded Mandrels

8/32" Threaded Knob Inserts

Silver Foil Marble Mold

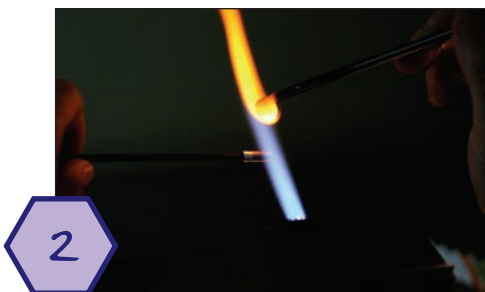
Holding Fingers

*Preheat the mandrel until it has a reddish glow.*



The inserts have machine-tooled grooves on them so that the finished piece will not slip off.

*Wind glass around the circumference of the insert.*



*Distribute the glass evenly around the insert.*



*Make sure that the glass is flush with the end of the mandrel.*



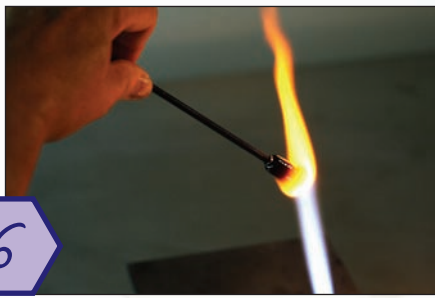
*Wind glass around the end to build up a platform to make a maria.*



When forming your maria, be careful to not push down too firmly on your marver. The glass should not bend back on itself, and everything should be centered and even. Keep the glass on center and remember to use insurance heat to the insert while working on the platform.

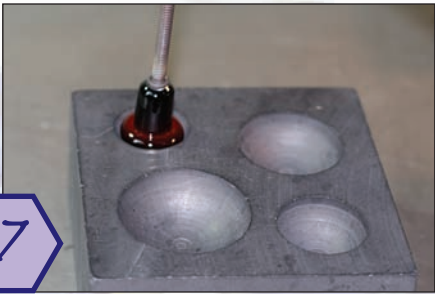
Angle the mandrel down so that the glass will flow evenly to the center.

6



Shape the knob dome in a marble mold.

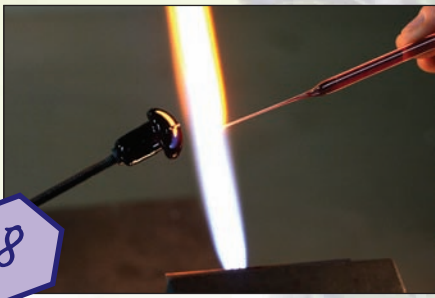
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This is a curved type of maria, so it's important to keep the mandrel perpendicular to the mold. Otherwise your knob will be off-center.

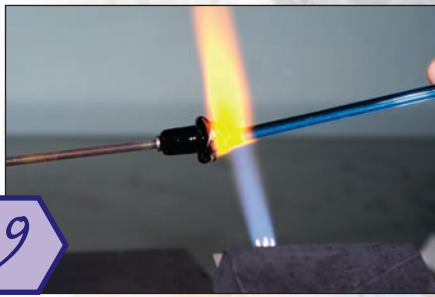
Apply Striking Orange and Gold Ruby dots randomly over the face of the knob and melt in.

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Pick up some silver foil and burnish in.

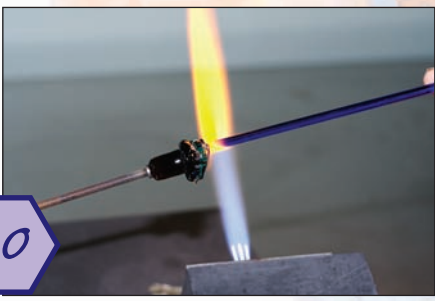
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Swipe transparent aqua over *some* of the foil.

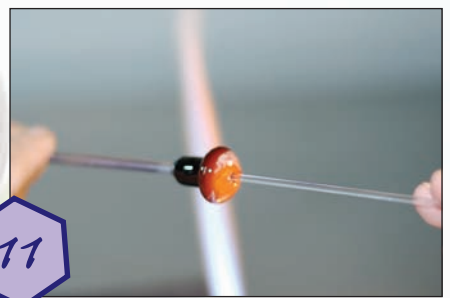
Add cobalt blue over the aqua and melt in.

10



Superheat the center of the insert and insert a cold stringer into the center of the face.

11



Twist in the opposite direction of the thread of the mandrel so that the insert does not loosen.

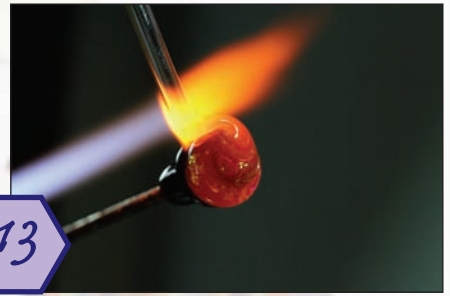
Heat a large gather of clear and completely cover the face of the insert in one swoop.

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Melt everything in slowly, creating a very smooth join between the encasing and matrix.

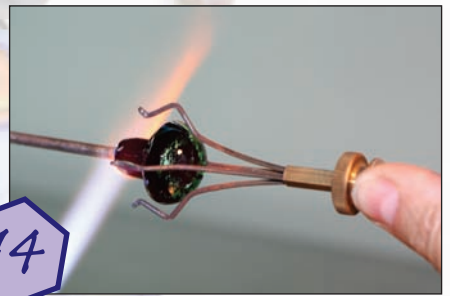
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Return the piece for a final shaping in the marble mold as in step 6. Fire-polish and place the mandrel and knob into an annealing kiln.

An optional way to put the knob into the kiln if the insert is not too tight is to use holding fingers to unscrew the knob.

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That way you can use the insert again for another knob. They're so much fun you may not want to stop!

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Susan Stortini is a Canadian lampworker who is inspired and highly motivated by the current evolving human consciousness movement. A proponent of using art as a mechanism for creating mindful intent in her pieces, her work reflects a spiritual and mindful approach to a very ancient art form. Initially self-taught, Susan has since been fortunate and grateful to have been able to study with some of the most respected bead artists. She, in turn, loves being able to share her knowledge as an instructor. You can e-mail her at [susan@stortinibeads.com](mailto:susan@stortinibeads.com).