



*Sharon Roberts-Karl
Luster, Enamel & Painted
Glass Designs*



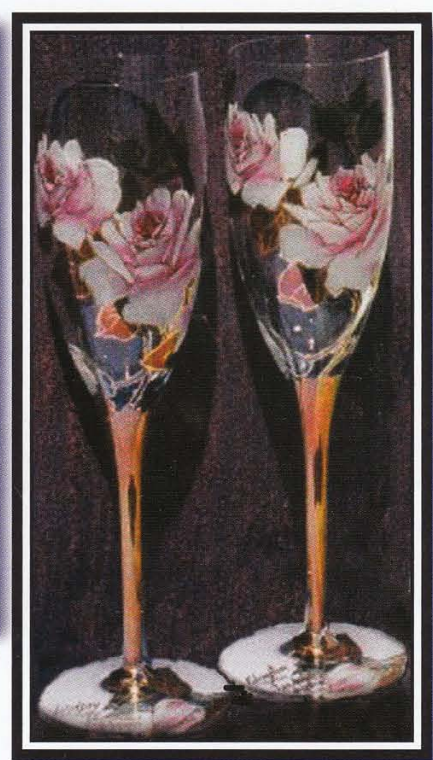
FLAMINGOS



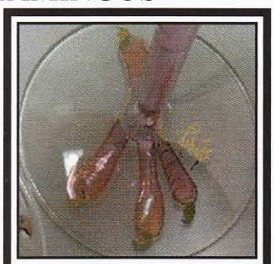
ROOSTER



ORCHID



ROSES



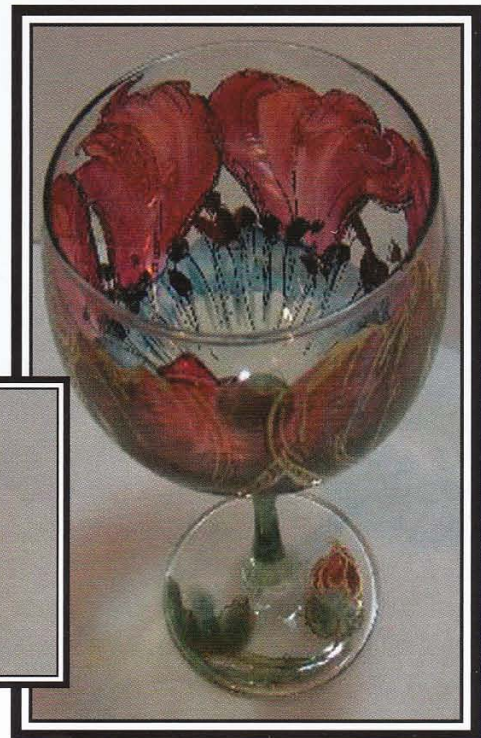
LOONS



WHITE LOTUS



RED POPPIES



When I began chinapainting, my teacher would bring out an intriguing box of lusters to be shared for our class Christmas projects. Clear glass ornaments were solidly stroked with the amber colored liquids. It was exciting to see how they changed into brilliant, festive colors after firing. The colored glass gleamed with translucent light. We would then decorate them with raised white enamel designs such as Snowflakes or Pinecones, and fire again. I gave some to each household in our family. The few I kept, hang high on our tree each season.

Years later at holiday time, our friends planned to gather for a celebration. Token gifts would be exchanged. As china painters, we often like to give something we've painted. If I could manage to do this, I'd have to keep my painting simple and close in equality for everyone. Time was limited. I wondered what I could paint in a fast, fun and pleasing way. I remembered those glass ornaments from long ago and had an idea. A new box of a dozen wine glasses sat on my shelf. I got out my lusters, chose mainly Red and Green colors, and painted Red Poppy style glasses, shown. Each glass was painted in freehand manner allowing the shape of the glass to be a guide for the design. It was surprising how fast several of the same pattern could be done, in one sitting. I liked the idea that you could see inside of the flower when you looked into the cup. Green luster was applied as a stem. On the base, I painted a bud to repeat the Red color for better balance.

After firing, Gold for Glass (matures and adheres at the lower glass firing temperatures) was applied to delineate and accent the petal shapes. To personalize, I wrote names on each near the bud and fired again. This really dressed them up. They looked pretty, together on the table and made for elegant place settings. We could look at them, into them, through them and use them. The luster is on the outside of the glass and ended about one quarter of an inch from the top rim for a safe lip line.

My next experiment was to paint a White flower. White luster isn't white in color. It fires clear on glass. I remembered the enamel snowflakes. I found that by adding a little lavender oil to thin the glass enamel, it painted very smooth. Strokes applied to the directional growth pattern made the most delicate, semi-opaque white petal shapes. White glass paint can be used the same way but produces a slightly different effect. Unfired enamel or paint will spread in an unattractive way if placed next to wet luster. It was safe to continue applying wet luster on other areas of the glass design away from wet enamel, such as the stem and base. Once fired, the white flowers were like a canvas. They could be shaded with colored paint to create depth as on the Lotus and Rose, or painted

more solidly as Black paint is on the loons.

Flowers will always be favorite classic subjects for glasses. A whimsical design would be a new and different idea to try. I had been painting many roosters on porcelain and why not on a glass? The Rooster's body could be very round. Gold on the glass stem could make for long, funny looking legs. Feet with Nails on the base would make an amusing finish. It was easy to create iridescent feathers by applying Mother of Pearl over the fired Black luster tail. It produces a rainbow effect, similar to the look of his natural tail feathers. The Pink Flamingos made a fun design also with long necks, billowing feathers and just one foot on the base. Loons are perfect subjects for those who love wild life. Crisp Black and White feather details lend contrast to the soft, luster colored scenery. Color reflections make their watery habitat look wet. Each kind of bird offers special characteristics that can be used to create an interesting design. Bird theme glasses make treasured hostess or housewarming gifts.

Many nicely shaped glasses for non-alcoholic beverages are available to paint. Last year, my sister-in-law became fascinated with Sea Otters after watching them frolic on one of her trips. I found short, round juice glasses to paint the playful creatures. The shape lent itself perfectly for these back floating bathers, who feast on the clams they carry on their bellies. People are thrilled with special interest glasses. They also make lucrative donations for charity auctions.

Glass manufacturers use many different formulas to produce their kinds of glasses. Each kind of glass will take the luster color to a slightly different tint. Violet luster as example, will appear darker, bluer, or pinker on different kinds of glass even when fired together in the same kiln load. Glass melt points will vary also. Some glasses will hold their shape for several fires while others may slump after the first, second or third fires.

Unleaded, inexpensive glass is the most fire friendly. I have had my share of flops, no denying that. It has helped me understand my materials and procedures more acutely. With every mistake, I learn something new. There is no substitute for experimenting.

Whether you use luster, enamel, paint or a combination on glass, the creative possibilities are endless.



PINK MAGNOLIAS



ORCHIDS



FROGS AT GLASS BASE



OTTERS