

# OPEN SALT COLLECTORS

# NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Issue #25 Spring 2013

## “Modern” Russian Enamel Open Salts

By Nina Robertson, with contributions by Léa Usin



When John Atzbach agreed to provide a discourse on Russian enamel salts for *The Open Salt Compendium*, co-author Sandra Jzyk and I were not simply elated: we considered our work on the subject to be complete, save for a few photographs and captions. John’s contribution to our book is authoritative. It is one of the most complimented chapters, noted for its thoroughness and detail. So it seems strange to suggest that Russian enamels are also one of the varieties of open salts most neglected by *The Compendium*. But that is an argument we have found ourselves frequently making.

So, how can it be that Russian enamel salts are both thoroughly addressed and sorely neglected in one reference book? The answer is that there are multiple  
*(continued on page 14)*

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## Editor's Notes:

It's hard to believe that this is the 25<sup>th</sup> issue of the National Newsletter! It doesn't seem like all that long ago that having a national newsletter was just a bright idea of a few club leaders—fast forward to 2013 and we've now enjoyed well over 400 pages of wonderful content! However, as has been said often before, the content of this newsletter primarily comes from readers such as you. **Please consider authoring an article**; it is really not as difficult as is commonly thought and the subject can be anything that interests you about the hobby we all share. Please contact me ([rodcelser@gmail.com](mailto:rodcelser@gmail.com)) if you have any interest in being a contributor.

Speaking of contributors, I'd like to give special recognition to Jim Wrenn for the excellent articles—together with their spectacular photos—he co-authored, with his wife, Joan, over the years for this newsletter. Their most recent article was published just this past summer. Jim will be sorely missed.

I'd also like to call attention to Kirk Nelson's article, starting on page 3. Kirk is President and Executive Director of the New Bedford Museum of glass and he has chosen our newsletter for the first-ever publication of some exciting new pattern identifications he has made. If you have either of the two rare salts he notes in his article, please contact Kirk or let me know.

Lastly, I'd like to extend my unreserved thanks to several people who came to my rescue in the past few weeks with wonderful articles: Nina Robertson, Mary Kern, Don Rabourn, and Lesley Solkoske. Some of these articles are in this issue while several others are now "in the vault" for your future enjoyment. Rod E.

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**13<sup>th</sup> National Open Salt  
Convention  
Newport, RI May 2-5,  
2013**

## President's Message:

As my term ends as OSC President I would like to thank everyone for their support and caring over these past two years. Your e-mails with encouragement and support have meant much to me. We have accomplished a lot in this time period: we now have 3 issues of the Newsletter a year, CASC has joined us and the by-laws have been rewritten. I would like to thank the officers and delegates who have been on the OSC Board for these past two years; you have each been a vital part of OSC.

Convention is right around the corner along all the fellowship it provides. However, three members will not be there to join us this year. Jim Wrenn, Grace Patterson and Ruth Pilling have all died since our last newsletter; all three of these people were very active in the clubs and a vital part of this community. Jim was the editor of the OSSOTW newsletter and took many of the pictures we have of convention and of OSSOTW meetings. I got to meet Ruth and Grace at convention and always looked forward to talking with them. They were both so friendly and full of knowledge.

Please remember to contact Sue S. with your nomination for the Achievement Award. If you would like to nominate someone for OSC Office or would like to run for an office yourself, also contact Sue ([csuesaw@gmail.com](mailto:csuesaw@gmail.com)). Remember that if you do nominate someone, please get their permission first.

For OSC Board Members, remember that the OSC Board meeting will be Thursday May 2, 2013 at 4 p.m. Please note this as it is a change from our normal meeting time of Friday evening.

See you at convention!

Sarah K.

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While we encourage the dissemination of information about open salt collecting, we do like to know in advance when and where material originally appearing in the *National Newsletter* will be used. Please contact the Editor ([rodcelser@gmail.com](mailto:rodcelser@gmail.com)) if you would like to use anything from this newsletter. When publication occurs, we also ask that a copy be sent for our archives.

The *National Newsletter* is the official publication of the Open Salt Collectors, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and encouraging the study, collecting and preservation of open salts. This is done through the publication of a national newsletter, maintaining an informational website, promoting membership in open salt collecting clubs, publishing informational and educational articles in collector publications and through other means as may be appropriate from time to time.

The *National Newsletter* of Open Salt Collectors is published three times per year, in April, August and December. Subscriptions are available through the organization's website ([www.opensalts.info](http://www.opensalts.info)).

# Rare Open Salt Dishes from the NBMOG Collection

By Kirk J. Nelson

What are the chances? Imagine two distinctive salt dish designs, a steamboat and a hat, that have never before been published for collectors. Now imagine that these two designs should be found listed together on a circa 1865 price list from one of the most intriguing of all the early American glass factories, the Cape Cod Glass Company of Sandwich, MA. Finally, imagine that an example of each salt dish should be given to the same museum in the same year by completely unrelated donors. One of these gifts, the hat, is still the only example of its kind ever found.

Unlikely as it sounds, glass collecting is full of such magical tales, and practically every collector has experienced them. The reason, in almost every case, can be summed up by a favorite saying of the late Vincent Ortello, former president of the Westchester Glass Club. Chance favors the prepared mind.

The first of the two salt dishes in question, a pressed tri-corner hat shape (Figure 1), was donated in 1999 by Mrs. Warren P. Tingley to the Glass Art Center, Inc., which later became the New Bedford Museum of Glass. With it came Mrs. Tingley's wonderful collection of more than 1,500 examples of American historical glass.



Figure 1: '76 Hat Salt Dish; Cape Cod Glass Co., Sandwich, MA, c.1865; L: 3"; Gift of Mrs. Warren P. Tingley; NBMOG Collection; Accession #199.143.1176

The tri-corner hat has the number "76" embossed onto its upper surface, and, judging from this detail, most collectors would assume that it dates to the U. S. Centennial of 1876 (Figure 2). As stated above, however, a description of

the hat appears on a price list that can be dated firmly to between 1864 and 1869.



Figure 2: Detail of the '76 Hat salt dish showing the embossed "76".

The description, under the heading "Salts," reads "No. 48 '76 Hat (individual)" (Figure 3). The hat predates the Centennial by at least seven years. It might, therefore, be more correct to associate it with the Civil War, which was fought to preserve the principles of union adopted by the country's founders in 1776. This unexpected association provides us with a more nuanced understanding of the "76" mark, as well as the tri-corner hat shape. Today, more than 130 years later, it is easy to forget that the celebration of the Centennial was given special poignancy and fervor by the then recent carnage of the Civil War. Our little salt dish, with its surprisingly early date, can serve as a reminder.

" 150 6 in. Mt. Vernon, . . .	
✦	
<b>Salts.</b>	
No. 33	Reeded, (individual) . . .
45	Star and punty, (individual) . . .
46	Rope bottom, . . .
47	Steamboat, . . .
48	'76 Hat, . . .
53	Shell, . . .
60	Derby, . . .
65	Octagon, . . .
85	Rope bottom, (individual, . . .
" 86	Heavy, . . . <i>Salt Dish</i>
87	French check, . . .
108	Diamond, (individual) . . .
500	Star bottom, " . . .
600	Methuen, " . . .
700	Cog, " . . .
<b>3-in. Nappies.</b>	
No. 31	Acorn, (vine) . . .

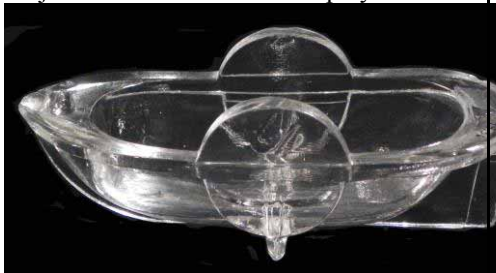
Figure 3: Price List Detail; Cape Cod Glass Co., Sandwich, MA, c.1865; Courtesy of The Sandwich Glass Museum/Sandwich Historical Society

The history of the factory that made the '76 salt dish likewise is rich in human interest and conflict. In 1825, long before the founding of the Cape Cod Glass Company, American glassmaker Deming Jarves built his first glass factory in the town of Sandwich, MA. This company was incorporated in 1826 as the Boston & Sandwich Glass Company, and became famous with glass collectors for the remarkable pressed glass technology that it helped to develop following the invention of the fixed-lever glass press that same year. Jarves ran the company successfully until his falling out with the Board of Directors in 1858. It was in that year that he left to build a rival factory, which he originally called the Cape Cod Glass Works and which he located on a lot practically adjacent to the old B&S. He also "stole" away many of his former key personnel. Jarves changed the name of the new business to the Cape Cod Glass Company in 1864 and operated it successfully until 1869, thereby giving us the precise date range for the company's only surviving price list. One additional point of interest regarding the company's period of operation: its furnaces were extinguished on April 15, 1869. What are the chances that Jarves would pass away on that same day? According to a notice in the local newspaper, he did, at age 78.

The second of the two salt dishes in question is a pressed glass steamboat shape (Figure 4) that was donated to the Glass Art Center collection in 1999 by the parents of the author, Mr. & Mrs. Ross G. Nelson. Coincidentally, they had purchased it from the same Vincent Ortello mentioned above. Less coincidentally, yours truly was serving as the director of the GAC at the time, had just received the '76 hat from the Tingley gift, had recognized the price list connection with the steamboat salt (having previously served for 10 years as the curator of the Sandwich Glass Museum), and shamelessly begged, wheedled and cajoled his parents to



donate the boat to GAC, where it could join the hat in the same display!



**Figure 4: Steamboat Salt Dish; Cape Cod Glass Co., Sandwich, MA, c.1865; L: 3 7/8"; Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Ross G. Nelson; NBMOG Collection; Accession #199.036**

Examining the price list again, just above the line that reads "No. 48 '76 Hat (individual)," we find "No. 47 Steamboat, (individual)."

Can we be certain that the short price list descriptions refer to the two salt dishes now in the NBMOG collection? Admittedly, not 100% certain, but what other candidates are there for the honor? No other hat-shaped salt dish with an embossed "76" is known. Likewise, no other steamboat-shaped salt dish dating to the period of the Cape Cod Glass Company is known. Its esteemed "B&S Glass Co." predecessor, much prized by all salt collectors, dates to circa 1835.

For any skeptics out there, I offer

one additional detail to help further associate the new steamboat design with Sandwich. Embossed on the bow of the boat is a small decorative acorn. We all remember Ruth Webb Lee's dramatic story in her pioneering 1939 book *Sandwich Glass* about the conflict between Deming Jarves and the railroad company, which enjoyed a transportation monopoly in the early 1850s and was preparing to raise its rates. Jarves threatened to build a steamboat for the glass company to circumvent the railroad entirely. According to Lee, the railroad official scoffed that "The acorn from which will grow the oak that will provide the lumber for your ship has not yet been planted."



**Figure 5: Detail of the Steamboat salt dish showing the acorn decoration**

Authors Raymond E. Barlow and Joan E. Kaiser record in *The Glass Industry in Sandwich* (Vol. 2, p. 27), that Jarves completed the building of his steamboat on July 1, 1854, and that he christened it "the Acorn." Is it mere coincidence that the Boston & Sandwich Glass Company would sell Jarves' beloved steamboat to private businessmen just five years later in 1859, the year after Jarves and the company had their bitter parting of ways? During the Civil War the Acorn would be converted into a gunboat and sunk off the coast of North Carolina. Could our little salt dish, therefore, be commemorative?

A total of fifteen different salt dish patterns appear on the Cape Cod Glass Company price list. All of them, like the '76 hat and the steamboat, are tersely described. What are the chances that the remaining thirteen should be identified and given to the NBMOG collection to join the hat and the boat? Only you, the enlightened, dedicated, generous and wide-ranging members of the Open Salt Collectors clubs, could possibly bring such a miracle to pass.

*Over the years, Kirk has spoken several times to salt collector clubs and we're exceptionally pleased to be the first to publish his exciting pattern discoveries.*

## About the New Bedford Museum of Glass

Two years ago a new glass museum opened to the public in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Its permanent collection covers the history of glass from Classical antiquity to the present and numbers more than 7,000 items. The collection includes art glass made in New Bedford by the Mt. Washington and Pairpoint factories, glass from the Midwest and other regions of the country, English and Continental glass, ancient glass dating back to 600 BC, historical glass, Tiffany and Steuben, paperweights, Sandwich glass, contemporary studio glass, and much more. Also on view are glassmaking tools, shards excavated from the Pairpoint factory site, and an extensive, long-term loan display of glass from the collection of the Bennington Museum, of Bennington, Vermont. The museum's research library, the largest of its kind in New England, holds 9,500 publications about glass and glassmaking.

The new glass museum originally was incorporated in 1993 as the Glass Art Center, and was affiliated with Bradford College in Bradford, Massachusetts. Following the closing of the college in 2000, the museum began its search for a new home. In 2005 New Bedford glass authority Louis. O. St. Aubin, Jr., suggested that it relocate to New Bedford, where an extensive glass industry had flourished in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The museum opened a small development office on North Water Street, changed its name to the New Bedford Museum of Glass, and welcomed local residents and collectors from across the country to join the exciting project. The late Kenneth M. Wilson, former Chief Curator of the Corning Museum of Glass, served as Vice President for several years prior to his passing in 2005. Kirk Nelson, who served as former Curator of Glass at the Sandwich Glass Museum and former Curator of Art and Decorative Arts at the Bennington Museum, was a founding trustee of the new museum and currently serves as President and Executive Director.

In 2009 NBMOG was invited by Jeff Costa, owner of the New Bedford Antiques Center, to establish its galleries and museum shop in a shared factory building space at 61 Wamsutta Street, located about two miles from downtown New Bedford. Renovation of the space began immediately, and the museum's grand opening celebration took place in September of 2010. Since that time the museum has continued to develop its collection, refine its gallery displays, and organize educational programs for local residents and an international community of glass collectors. Last year the museum hosted seminars for the Antique Glass Salt and Sugar Shaker Club and the Mt. Washington & Pairpoint Glass Society. This spring (May 8th-10th), the museum will host a combined seminar for the National American Glass Club and the Mt. Washington & Pairpoint Glass Society. **And we look forward to participating with the Open Salt Collectors at their annual convention in Newport, RI, May 2nd-5th! For more information about the museum, please visit our website at [www.nbmog.org](http://www.nbmog.org).**

## Snowbird Salt Collectors Meeting/Gathering on February 9, 2013, Brooksville, FL

Cloverleaf Farms, just north of Brooksville, FL, and winter residence of Lesley S., served as the site of this winter's gathering. Our Connecticut connections of Lesley, Sue B., and Karen W. were co-hostesses to attendees Lorraine & Fred A., Pam & Murray A., Barb & Chick E., Linda F., Kathy F., Nola & Maris J., Sue S., & Donna W.

Three weeks prior to this gathering, Grace Patterson (February 4, 1920 – January 13, 2013) of Lakeland, passed away. Grace regularly attended the Snowbird Meetings and was a buyer, seller, and collector of open salts for over 50 years. She and her family hosted a snowbird gathering in 2004 at her home in Lakeland. Her collection of over 4000 salts was on display in a room containing cabinets full of open salts. We will miss Grace with her ready smile, sense of humor, and her wealth of knowledge and experience in open salt collecting.



**Grace Patterson**

**SHOW AND TELL:** Note: Only some of the lovely salts brought for Show and Tell are shown here.



**Small pressed-glass purse—Barb E.**



**Two small pottery salts--Barb E.**



**Royal Doulton salt--Fred & Lorraine A.**



**Silver-plate salt with cobalt insert--Fred & Lorraine A.**



**Silver plate with cobalt insert; cartouche for Jamaica & Empire Trade Exhibition, 1934; Lesley S.**



Russian enamel; marked on base; c. 1889; Pam A.



Russian enamel with clear-glass liner; c. 1930-50; purchased in Moscow; Kathy F.

In addition to Show and Tell, participants discussed how to research salts to establish their history and significance to an individual collection. The reference books noted were Heacock & Johnson's *5000 Open Salts* (1982, reprinted 1995), *The Open Salt Compendium* by Jzyk & Robertson (2002), as well as the Allan and Helen Smith 10-book series titled *Open Salts Illustrated* (1970-80s). Other familiar names were Coddington's, the Neal book, and the Tompkins *Handbook of Gorham Open Salt Dishes* (1987). Elaine Cooper's book, *Doulton Open Salts*, is a more recent publication (2009). The internet is invaluable with resources a la "Google" and websites such as [www.opensalts.info](http://www.opensalts.info) (Open Salt Collectors), [www.opensalts.net](http://www.opensalts.net), and [www.opensalts.us](http://www.opensalts.us).

Lesley's showing of her tulip-wood turned salt was a good "segue" into the world of salt research. This salt was well marked on the bottom and answered the "W" questions of Who? (CL Stickney and CA Harris); What? (tulip-wood salt); Where? (2 Linden St., Brattleboro, VT); but was missing the When? After visiting the address and seeing that it is now a parking lot, Lesley consulted a Brattleboro city directory and located a CL Stickney at that address in 1945. With her



Lesley's Tulip wood salt

sister's help in pulling up census records, Lesley learned Mr. Stickney was at that address in 1920 and also in 1940. Using Google, Lesley pulled up a lengthy obituary which reported Mr. Stickney bought the Linden St. house in 1912 and died unexpectedly in 1946. Thus, the answer to "When" was narrowed to circa 1912 – 1946! Both Mr. Stickney and Mr. Harris were bankers, and Mr. Stickney also served as president of the Brattleboro hospital.

Following a terrific lunch, and prior to Buy and Sell, Donna showed her recent photos of the travelling Chihuly Glass Exhibit at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. CASC members visited there at the recent January 26 meeting. The glass pieces Dale Chihuly designs and makes are huge and easily dwarf any open salt! Colors are outstanding and the themed displays are amazing—from boats to Navaho rugs. Lesley also had pictures from a traveling exhibit she attended. The website, [www.Chihuly.com](http://www.Chihuly.com) showed 200 museum collections around the world including 14 in Florida. Of note, Mr. Chihuly received a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation grant in 1967 for work in glass. He became the first American glass blower to work in the Venini factory on the Island of Murano in 1968. Certainly Tiffany and Venetian glass are familiar names to open salt collectors.

Buy and Sell was an active time before the gathering scattered. No firm commitment on 2014's gathering place, but the National Convention in May could produce a result!

Happy Salting,

Pam A., February 25, 2013





Engraved Ashtray with Cranberry rim.

# Salts That Are NOT Salts!

By Don Rabourn

**My Theory:** Whatever the original intended purpose, once you buy it, it becomes an open salt. The only criteria are that it is pretty, cute or unusual, and that it will hold salt.

This pictorial article purposely does not include any nut cups—such as Heisey, Fenton, Fostoria, etc. All of those items have been covered previously. Most of us have some “not salts” in our collections, and I would not part with any in my collection!



Fairy Light Base (rim indicates missing lid)



Figure Fairy Light Base



Sowerby Novelty Item



Victorian Dressing Table Dish



Sowerby Novelty Item



Heisey items: Moongleam Egg Cup; Sterling-rim Tea Drip; New Era Ashtray w/cutting; Crystallite leaf.



Victorian Dressing Table Dish



Sowerby Novelty Item



Originally sold as a jelly dish.



Originally sold as a Horseradish Dish



A Double "Aurene" Glass w/Silver Holder (Unmarked Tiffany?)--could have held two bottles.



Intaglios with various uses: two ashtrays with salt spoons added; a turquoise salt (a real salt!) with a matching pepper shaker; a small crystal pointed oval tray with a perfume; and a large lavender piece.



Various small baskets that were made as favors & knickknacks.



Belleek Ashtray



A Round Lalique piece with bird rim; an EAPG children's toy sugar; and an EAPG Reverse 44 Pattern 3-footed piece with green flashing.



Belleek Ashtray



Glass Cordials or pieces to Decanter Sets.



Delft Holland Windmill piece



Probably made to hang on a Sweet Meat Epergne.



As a flower lover, I've added 4 "flower-shaped" salts.



China Items: 1 with Capodimonte scene and others with English scenes.





Miscellaneous metal pieces; the bird was originally a saccharine holder.



Lalique-type opalescent shell.



Zsonlay Pecs Pottery; Marked *Made in Hungary*; probably post-1900 and probably an Ashtray or Knickknack.



Six glass "salts" (Cobalt piece marked "Sandefjord")



At 2" deep, not right for a salt.



Originally "stuffed" for a pin cushion.



Six ceramic pieces, including two obvious egg cups.



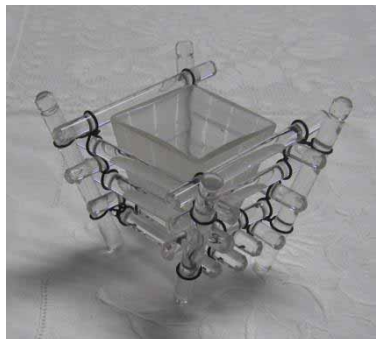
Beautiful ruby cut-to-clear piece but at 1 7/8" square, too large for an individual and too small for a table salt.



Wedgewood Jasperware; Ashtray & Holder for Cigarette Lighter.



Three china pieces including at least one ashtray.



Perhaps toothpick holder made largely from glass rods.



Handled, enameled "salt" that was probably sold originally as a pipe holder.



Soapstone carved bird "salt".

## Open Salts by the Table Art Company

The **Table Art Company** is the creation of artist, Michael Michaud, who has designed the **Silver Seasons** line of jewelry for many years. Over this time he has expanded the line into giftware and tabletop items, including, among other items, napkin rings, candleholders, serving utensils and open salts! Michaud creates his molds from natural elements: flowers, fruits, plants, berries, leaves and sea life—all reflect his love of nature. The items are then cast in a base metal, typically pewter or bronze, and then finished in layers of gold, silver, and/or copper.

There are twelve designs in open salts that can be found on-line: Seashell; Sea Urchin; Honeybee; Bog Frog; Tulip Leaf; Aspen Leaf; Ginkgo Leaf; Grape Leaf; Tea Leaf; Lady's Mantle Leaf; Orange Blossom; and the Hibiscus Flower. All the salts come with a matching spoon. Originally all the salts were cast in bronze and finished in either antique silver over copper or gold over copper, although the sea urchin is now also available in sterling silver. New versions of the ginkgo leaf and sea urchin have now been made in cast glass; green for the ginkgo leaf and clear for the sea urchin. Most pieces are available in only one or two finishes. Prices, including the spoon, range from \$28 to about \$60, with the exception of the sterling one which is approximately \$120. Most of the salts vary in size from 2 ¼" to 2 ¾" in diameter while the larger ones can be up to nearly twice as large.

These are beautiful salts and clearly have been designed to be both practical and add beauty to the table. Not to mention that it is wonderful to see new salts being made not merely as collectibles but as actual open salts! They can be found in select gift shops or on line at (in alphabetical order): [atthemeadow.com](http://atthemeadow.com); [BayFlora.com](http://BayFlora.com); [HannasHomeFurnishings.com](http://HannasHomeFurnishings.com); [PennelloGallery.com](http://PennelloGallery.com); [SattvaGallery.com](http://SattvaGallery.com); and [ScarlettAlley.com](http://ScarlettAlley.com).



Sea Shell Salt in Bonze Finish



Sea Urchin Salt in Glass; 1 ¾" by 1 ½"



Honeybee Salt in Pewter Finish—A Covered Salt! Spoon not shown.





Sea Urchin in Gold over Silver Finish



Bog Frog in Pewter; 1 1/2" high by 1 1/4" diameter



Tulip Leaf in Green Gold over Copper Finish



Aspen Leaf in Pewter Finish



Ginkgo Leaf in Bronze Finish



Ginkgo Leaf in Pewter Finish



Ginkgo Leaf in Cast Glass with a Bronze Spoon; 3" diameter



Grape Leaf in Bronze Finish



Tea Leaf in Gold Finish



Lady's Mantle Leaf in Antique Bronze Finish; 3 1/4" by 3"



Orange Blossom Leaf in Antique Bronze; 4 1/2" by 1"



Hibiscus Flower in Gold over Silver Finish; 4" by 3"



# Salts, She Wrote

## By Mary Kern

I do realize that when I decided to change the name of my column from the supposed question and answer venue of “Ask Mary” or even “Mary Asks” to “SALTS, SHE WROTE”, that there might be some anticipation of a mystery in each column. To be very open and honest, there is a mystery in each and every one I write and have written for some time. That mystery is how I keep coming up with enough silly chatter to fill the required space and hopefully keep your attention! I have always admired and looked up to Ed and Kay Berg for the many years of monthly writings they did, but lately I have to say I am in total awe of their ability to do so for so long. If I wore hats, they would be off to them, My Idols.

The mystery for this specific column is the color Green. No, not the envious color I am most of the time from seeing the salts that are in your cabinets instead on mine, but the actual color green. I have more green salts than any other color. I am going to make sense of this, I promise. . . well as much sense as I can, so you know it is going to be an easy explanation; just going to require a lot of words to get it done.

When I was about 6 years old, my parents bought their first home in this little community Bob and I still live in. The house was and still is green stucco. It was an era of Early American furniture and earth tones, such as greens, browns and oranges. Our couch and chairs were shades of green; oh, and the draperies too. My mother was a marvelous seamstress and made a bedspread and pillow shams of the darkest green with some contrasting color in flowers. I only remember the green. Green was in the kitchen, the bathrooms and each and every bedroom. We were up to our ceilings in green. Even my

commencement dress from elementary school was green. The '65 Chevy Malibu I cruised the Boulevard in my senior year at high school—Yep, Green! Now it took my mother a long time to decide she was sick of green and go to the Southwest pinks and blues, but I have to tell you, I was through with green by about the age of 12, though I did overlook the color of that souped-up Chevy.

So now you see, the big mystery is why do I have so many green salts when pink is my favorite color? I don't know! It just happened that way. I was not completely aware of this green binge I was on until a short time ago I decided to rearrange my shelves again and put my colored glass together. One curio is all the colored glass, one color to a shelf. It is my rainbow!! But much to my lack of understanding . . . Green! . . . a shelf full of green. No space available; crammed in tighter than sardines. What have I done? Then I started to look at the other shelves. Oh no, more green!! The only Nekrassoff I kept is – Green.



My miniature Bimini's;



a pitiful, sorely abused Battersea;



and a Raz frog.

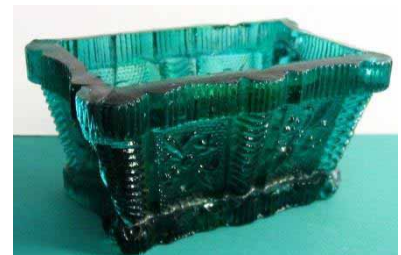


Handblown by Raz Sugita; only 1 1/8" h.

I have only five frosted-glass animals, two of which are green.



I even have green in my Lacies:



and each of my Faience animals stands on a platform of pretend green grass.



Most of my Elfinware has the heavy green moss on it;



And I have green commemorative salts. I cannot get away from it!



NESOSC 1978-1998 Anniversary Salt



MOSS 1995-2005 Anniversary Salt



OSSOTW-SO Special 2012 by Robert R.

Even in my kitchen where German piggies have a shelf, I see they all are hiding behind a green trough;



and on the top ledge of my stove, Conta Boehme, all in green.



And, of course, that shelf of green glass salts. Every shade is available, from the richest to the faintest; intaglios that shine and intaglios that are opaque;



grand old pattern pieces;





delicate art glass salts;



nut cups;



and even simple salts.



One of Mary's Grandmother's salts!

I love that shelf, I must admit it. It is gorgeous with its shades of green and when the sun hits it, oh my!! Now you will notice that the last picture I sent to go with this column is of a lazy cat without a salt in sight.



Albert (who surprisingly doesn't collect salts) enjoying himself!

Please note the couch the cat is so comfortably draped upon. Anyone who has been to our house knows that couch and has more than likely sat on it if they could get Albert to give them room. Yes, it is a green couch and it is in our home. From a childhood green sofa to a whatever-stage-of-age I am currently in, I have come full circle.

**And I am lovin' the green I'm livin' in !!!**

***(Russian Salts--Continued from the Cover)***

varieties of Russian enamel open salts. John Atzbach covered in the greatest detail and with exceptional accuracy the enamel salts produced in Russia during the pre-Revolutionary period. In his text, he identifies the years 1870 to 1917 as the most prolific period of production. It's no coincidence this period coincides with the rise of the upper middle class after the Industrial Revolution and the fall from favor of all things bourgeois at the time of the Russian Revolution. In covering this period of Russian enamel production, Mr. Atzbach did exactly what we wanted – more expertly and in far greater detail than we ever thought we had the right to expect.

That said, most of us who have collected salts for more than a year or two know that production of open salts continued in the USSR after the Russian Revolution. Most of us have seen and many of us own a variety of open salt produced much later than 1917.

One such salt in my personal collection is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Russian salt of white metal c. 1997 (?)



This salt (or one just like it) is shown in *The Open Salt Compendium*, plate 408. This is the only plate in our book that shows examples of salts of recent Russian production. As he notes in his text, Mr. Atzbach had to identify and value most of the salts in the Russian Enamel section simply through the photographs we provided to him. So the limited coverage of these salts is entirely Sandy's and my fault and not at all his. In point of fact, Mr. Atzbach does discuss modern Russian salts in his text, including the two varieties that we did not illustrate in even one single photograph, possibly because we weren't very aware of them (if we were aware of them at all) at the time we were working on the book. Examples of these salts are shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3. We'll begin our discussion of modern Russian enamel salts by looking at these varieties, saving the more recent salts such as that in Figure 1 for later.



Figure 1 Flat base salt, simple shading, c. 1927-1958



Figure 2 Modern Russian salt, 3-ball feet, c. 1958+

I have opted to discuss these two varieties of salts together because they are, like their predecessors, fabricated of precious metals – almost exclusively various grades of solid silver with gold gild. The only information I was able to find about these salts, other than Mr. Atzbach's brief notes in *The Compendium*, is related to their marks.

These enamel-on-precious-metal salts carry two different marks, as follows:

## 1. PRECIOUS METAL (SILVER) SALTS PRODUCED BETWEEN 1927-1958

Every example with these marks I have ever seen has been of the same size and shape: squatty, round, with a flat base (no feet, no pedestal). They can be of 875/1000 or 916/1000 parts pure silver. The grade at this time is expressed in the mark as the silver value (875 or 916) instead of using the "84" and "91" marks of the earlier salts covered by Mr. Atzbach in *The Compendium*. Enamel on these more recent silver salts can be shaded or not, as shown in Figures 4-9.



Figure 3 Very simple salt with fairly crude shading on the leaf-shape form cells only.



Figure 4 No shading; primary colors with the addition of pale turquoise. Sold recently on eBay for \$81.

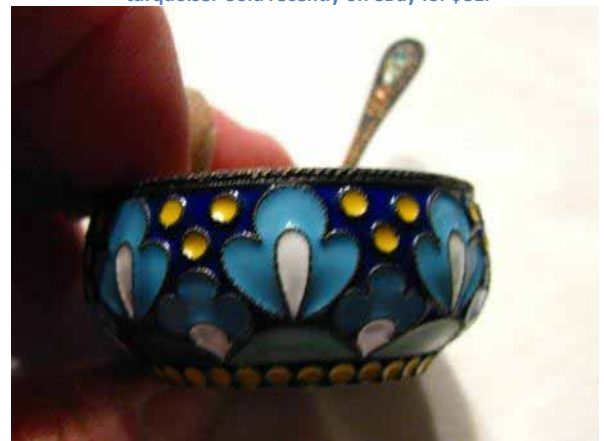


Figure 5 Very similar to Figure 5; no shading. Sold on eBay in Jan. 2013 for \$105.



Figure 6 More detailed shading but still simple in comparison to older Russian enamels. Sold on eBay for \$129.



Figure 7 Simple shading; interesting decorative use of twisted wire normally employed only to form cells. Sold on eBay, where the seller dated it to c. 1951.



Figure 8 Another variation on the salt shown in Figures 5 & 6. Sold on eBay for \$125 in Jan. 2013.

A typical mark on this variety of Russian enamel salt features a later kokoshnik mark. The kokoshnik mark, originated by an edict of Tsar Nicholas II in 1896, includes a woman's head in profile. The word kokoshnik refers to the traditional peasant headdress that she wears. Until 1908, the woman faces left in an oval cartouche that includes the

silver grade expressed in zolotniki (84, 91, etc.) After 1908, the woman faces right in a similar oval cartouche. All of the salts I have personally examined have a mark that appears to be a rectangle (containing the kokoshnik) enjoined with an oval (containing the silver content). I found one reference depicting this mark and attributing it to the period from 1927-1958. But that is a single reference. I could not find three or more sources to confirm this. The mark on one of my salts of this variety is shown in Figure 10. The mark to the left of the kokoshnik is the maker's mark, which I have been unable to identify.



Figure 9 Typical punch marks found on salts from the 1927-58 period.

## 2. PRECIOUS METAL (SILVER) SALTS PRODUCED AFTER 1958

Once again, all of the salts of this period I have seen are the same shape and form: a round, half-sphere bowl on three small, ball feet; most are not shaded. Examples of these salts are shown in Figures 11-14.



Figure 10 Prevalent use of black enamel, especially in backgrounds, appears in this time period. Sold on eBay in Feb. 2012 for \$140.





Figure 11 Another black background, this one with modest shading on the white surfaces. Note that this is basically a two-color salt (black & white) except for the red used to shade the large white cells. Sold on eBay in Feb. 2013 for \$158.50 (with spoon).



Figure 12 This handsome pair of daisy salts, similar to Figures 3 and 11, was recently sold on eBay for \$294.



Figure 13 A beautiful example with decorative use of twisted wire on black background; simple shading adds a lot of interest to the design. This is one of a pair recently sold on eBay for \$284.

I have not had an opportunity to closely examine the marks on any of these salts other than the one in my collection, but I would expect to find the same silver touch mark. In 1958, the Russian silver mark changed to a cartouche featuring a star with a hammer & sickle in it alongside the silver content. Figures 15 and 16 show this mark.



Figure 14 Marks on c. 1958 Russian enamel salt shown in Figure 3.



Figure 15 Close up of c. 1958 Russian silver mark.

We will now move to a discussion of the most recent varieties of Russian enamel salts. Most all of us should be familiar with this variety of salt.... Even if you have not seen the exact salt shown in Figure 1, you have probably seen many of its kin, the most common of which are enameled with red and white fish scales or lime green leaves and red berries (see plate 408 in *The Compendium*). A set of three which recently sold on eBay is shown in Figure 17.



Figure 16 Set of 3 Russian salts sold on eBay in Jan. 2013 for \$44 for all (salts & spoons).

There are also modern takes on the famous and expensive Russian salt throne. Whereas the pre-Revolutionary examples will be found in solid silver, sometimes with elaborate enameling, the more recent versions are formed from twisted wire. Figures 18-20 show three varieties.





Figure 17 Modern Russian throne salt with metal liner and horse heads on chair back. (I think Sandy is sorry she ever sold this one!)



Figure 18 A common, modern Russian throne salt with glass liner & scrolled filigree.



Figure 19 A gold-plated version of the silver-colored salt in Figure 18. Sandy found this with its original labeling. The box is marked "Made in Russia"; another label notes "Princess, #314 Salt-Cellar/spoon, 24 k. gold-plate."

The remainder of this article is written in its entirety by Léa Usin, who has invested substantial time researching the non-precious-metal salts produced after 1959. Léa mentions that many of these salts have been found in their original boxes, and she has done research using original labels when she has found them. Since my salt shown in Figure 1 came in its original box, with the original labels and inserts, I have included a number of photos following Léa's information (Figures 22-28). They provide information that may be useful to anyone wishing to pick up the baton and continue this research—and I look forward to reading your findings in a future issue of the OSC National Newsletter!

*(Note: a different font has been used for Léa's material.)*



Figure 20 A grouping of recent Russian salts.

### **BASE METAL (MELCHIOR) SALTS PRODUCED AFTER 1959 (PERHAPS MUCH LATER)**

I think I have some useful information on the tourist salts, as I call them, because I believe they were mostly sold to Western visitors through souvenir shops. The prices on them would have made them very expensive for the average Soviet citizen, but even at the exorbitant official Russian exchange rate for dollars, they were a reasonable item for tourists.

So, on to the markings: First, they just about all are stamped I-OMMET, though the "I-O" is more squished together in the Cyrillic alphabet than I can do on my typeface here. I-O is pronounced as 'yu' in Russian, and here stands for 'juvelir', the Russian word for 'jeweller'. The next M stands for Mstera and MET for 'metal'. Mstera is a town in Russia quite known for its artisans, and Mstera Jewellers was/is (?) a highly regarded company; MET, 'metal', was the common way in which goods were stamped to indicate that the metal was not precious metal. I don't know if it was used for all other metals or just for melchior (more on that later).

The I-OMMET mark is usually preceded by a number, which is the date code. As near as I can figure out, partly from trying to translate some Russian sources, the number in front of the name referred to a year in the 1960s. Sometimes the number is found between the two Ms and this refers to a year in the 1970s. This progression also seems to be borne out by the increasing prices stamped on them. Yes, the grand old USSR also had inflation!

I've been trying to track down the date the law was passed, but I do know that at some point the USSR started requiring permanent price stamps on articles, in order to prevent merchants from selling at a higher price and reaping what was considered an unfair profit.

All of this leads me to the second stamp which is found on all but the oldest of the salts. (I'm also pretty sure that the practice stopped at some point, though whether before or after the fall of the USSR I'm not sure. One can also speculate that due to the 'efficiencies' of the Soviet system, there might have been warehouses full of these salts, some with older stamps on them, but first seeing the light of day at a later date.)

The second stamp looks close to 'u\_p K'. First, it's not really a 'u' but rather a Cyrillic letter that looks like a 'u' but with a little tail hanging down at the end of the letter, and which is pronounced as 'ts'. Here it is being used as an abbreviation for 'tsena', the Russian word for 'price'. Then, in my first blank, a number, followed by 'p', the Cyrillic form of what we pronounce as 'r', which gives the number of rubles; following, two numbers followed by 'K', our 'k', give the number of kopeks, of which there were 100 to the ruble. The 'K' especially seems to confuse a lot of people, leading them to assume this is some sort of hallmark.

The last matter to be dealt with is the material of which they are made. All of the decorated ones seem to have been made with hot enamel. (I have a gloriously bad fake that is probably made with cold enamel paint.) The base metal on all of them is melchior, an alloy of copper, nickel, and zinc, which was developed by the Russians as a silver substitute, and used very widely in Soviet jewelry and tableware.

The tricky part is that, at some date that I haven't yet figured out, some of them started to be silver plated. I have the original boxes for a few of them, and most of them have the

composition identified simply as melchior, but a few start to also list silver, though only at a percentage that could be used for plating. Under no circumstances are any of them sterling!!!! (Do you sense that this is a point close to my heart, lol? There's an Australian seller especially who refuses to believe this, though there are others as well.) Among other things, the USSR seems to have been a bit sticky about allowing the importation or exportation of precious metals. (I remember how nervous a visiting aunt was about smuggling back a cheap silver ring that I was sending to one of my cousins in Estonia.)

There are also a couple of salts that have a golden color to them. Some sellers insist that they are gold plated, others that they are brass or brass plated. Whereas it seems true that the bowls of the accompanying spoons have a gold layer, on the salts themselves I would suggest that it's brass plating, since they seem to darken over time in a way that the spoon bowls do not. It's also quite possible that the post-USSR ones might be gold plated, in order to attract the newer buyers

I've also been trying to snaffle photos from sellers who have the original boxes. Unfortunately, in many cases the information (such as the price) does not agree between the box and the salt itself. One day (soon?) I'm going to try to correlate dates of manufacture with plating or not. I think I have about 30 of these salts but unfortunately most did not come with their original boxes.

I would also very much like the information in the H&J book set right: I do not believe any of these salts were made in the 1940s, when Russia was either at war or still with a shortage of metals because of the war. One of my salts is marked with I-OMMET with no number and another has OI-OMMET, so I think it is reasonable to infer that the earliest exemplars are from 1959 (or thereabouts; post-Khrushchev thaw) and then 1960. I believe sincerely I have cracked some of the history of these cute salts, and my credentials include that I have a Ph.D., am a tenured professor at a major Canadian university, and my courses involve teaching the history and theory of the arts. None of that, of course, proves that I am not horribly wrong about some stuff, but I hope this puts me in a more reliable category than some sellers whose descriptions I have challenged and who would tell me their impeccable source was 'some Russian woman'.





Figure 21 The original box holding the salt in Figure 1.

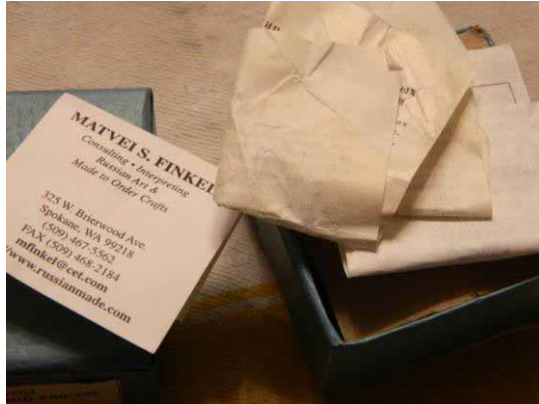


Figure 22 Inside the box . . . original literature.



Figure 23 Getting down to the salt & spoon.

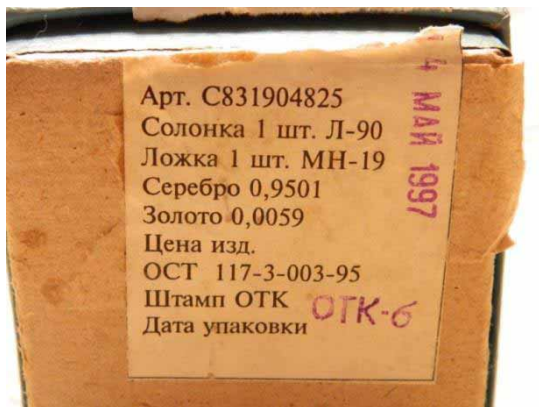


Figure 24 The original label on the bottom of the box . . . Looks like 1997 to me. According to Léa, the first line is the article number; the second is about the salt; the third is

about the spoon; the fourth indicates this one was silverplated; and the last line gives the amount of gold used.



Figure 25 A second label inside the box matches the one glued to the outside.

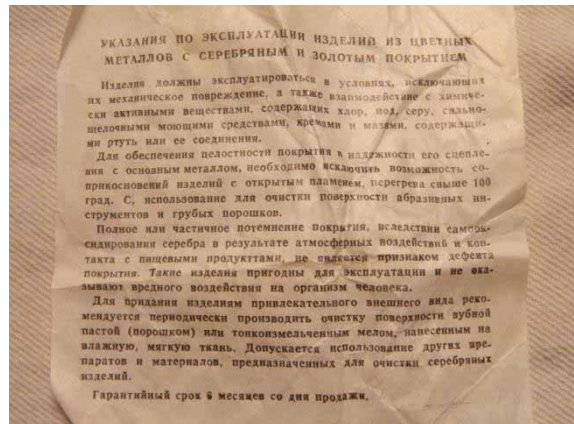


Figure 26 I once had someone look at this insert through a third party. I was told it is information on the fabrication and care. Anyone out there speak Russian?



Figure 27 The eBay seller included his card in the box. Looks like a fun speaker for a future meeting! Contact information may still be good but the website seems to have gone defunct.