



Latest and Greatest

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Can you believe that 2011 is here already? It's been such a hectic year-I guess it's no surprise that time has been flying by. At SMC, we are excited for what 2011 will bring. Our New Year's Resolution is to introduce several outstanding product lines. We've been hard at work developing and testing fantastic new clay bodies, glazes, slips and underglazes-to make sure they are good enough to join our brand and share with you. As always, SMC is committed to only bringing our customers products that are high quality, consistent, user-friendly and reliable. Because your time should be spent creating your art-that's your job. Let us worry about the rest-that's ours.

FEATURED GLAZE...



We're kicking off 2011 with a very special deal on everyone's favorite cone 6 blue glaze-Azurite (#464).

Azurite is a bright and gorgeous waterfall blue glaze, that breaks to an emerald green where thin. It layers beautifully with many glazes, including Rose Quartz, Egg

Cream, Leopard Agate, Peridot and Caramel Corn.

Foodsafe when used and fired properly, Azurite is ideal for dinnerware, beautiful on a variety of clays and works very well on textured surfaces.

Through February 28, shop at SMC and mention coupon code "SMC0111" to receive **20% off** the purchase prices of any pints or 1-gallon buckets of Azurite glaze.

This offer is good for both walk-in and shipped orders, and on in-stock merchandise only (may not be combined with other specials).

SMC Glazing Tip:

We all love the look of waterfall colors that break and change over form and texture of our pots. And the best way to have a lot of variety is layering glazes.

But how do you know what will work well (or NOT work well) together? Experimentation is key. Make small test pieces, so you don't lose your favorite pot to a combination that may not be what you want. And be sure to make the test pieces vertical and textured, that way you can see how the glazes will move and break together. Some facts to keep in mind:

- ◆ Never assume that red+blue=purple. Some glazes are made with stains, and combining them can be predictable. However, if glazes are colored with chemicals such as cobalt, copper or iron-they can react in unpredictable ways.
- ◆ If a glaze moves (runs) on your pot when used alone, expect that it will move more when layered. For example, glazes that contain a lot of red iron oxide will often move more, you should use care when layering with these colors.
- ◆ When layering, typically more color change/interaction will typically be noticeable if the more sheer glaze is applied on TOP. With your opaque glaze as a base color, the sheer glaze will be more likely to show. Opaque glazes will sometimes devour sheer glazes. However, you can see different color effects when you layer glazes in different orders, and another if you actually mix the two glazes together before applying.
- ◆ If you apply glazes together and the second glaze wants to crack or peel, try a different combination. Some glazes just don't get along. And if the two can't play nicely together during application, expect that they could have a bigger argument in the kiln.

Of course, if you aren't the experimental type, you can let SMC do the work for you. Visit the Glazes page on our website and click on the link to Dynamic Duos-it's packed with great combinations, detailed pictures and application descriptions. We update it every few weeks, and welcome customer submissions and feedback. Each of our beautiful cone 6 glazes also has its own page-with a list of our glazes that we recommend for layering.

NEW AT SMC...

Comfortable and sturdy handmade aprons! Ideal for clay work, these split leg work aprons have a convenient adjustable neckstrap, allowing you to easily customize the length of your apron. Made out of high quality materials and stitched with care-these work aprons are available in a variety of colors and patterns for only \$25.

Liquid Smoke cone 6 glaze! A deep, sheer gray-green, **Liquid Smoke** (#418) is an ideal glaze for use over surface textures and carvings, impressions and red iron oxide designs. Color will vary depending on thickness. Beautiful and earthy when used alongside/over **Cranberry Juice**, **Ginger Mist** and **Praline Marble**. **Liquid Smoke** is food-safe when used properly.



Polar Frost cone 6 glaze! An icy, rich Arctic blue color, **Polar Frost** (#417) has a finish that will vary from glossy and deep to a lighter, frosty finish. The glaze will give a rich, glossy finish when dipped—and break beautifully when brushed on textured pieces to highlight carving and surface design. **Polar Frost**, like all of our cone 6 glazes, is food-safe when used properly.

BE CAREFUL!

Keep an eye on the temperature—don't let your clay and glaze freeze.

Our clays arrive to you well-mixed with no air pockets, and are ready to use straight out of the bag. If you allow the clay to freeze and thaw, the water will disperse unevenly, creating bubbles and inconsistent texture. Clay that has been frozen must be re-wedged before use.

If you allow glazes to freeze, they may thaw and perform fine. Often, however, glaze can crystallize or undergo a chemical reaction, resulting in unpredictable firing results.

SMC Clay Tip: Smooth, Coarse, Soft, Firm—What Are We Talking About?

We all know that clay selection is key to giving you the proper foundation for your work. Because of the wide variety of work styles, drying techniques, firing habits—what works for one person may not work for the next. At SMC we want to make sure that we help you find the right clay body for your style.

Smooth vs. Coarse: Often, clays are described by an artist, and a manufacturer, by their “feel”—talking about the texture and size of the actual clay particles. Smoother clays are typically ideal for fine surface detail, imprints and carving. Coarse clays are typically more ideal for creating larger pieces with ease, these clays are typically more forgiving when “overworked.”

Firm vs. Soft: These descriptions usually have to do with the amount of water contained in a clay body. Firm clays have less water, soft clays have more water. Typically firmer clays are ideal for handbuilding and slab work, and for those who use a lot of water when they throw. Soft clays are great for throwing small pieces, and centering these bodies can be more simple—especially for those who have problems with their wrist or hand. Soft clays are also great for artists who do not use much water when throwing.

The Importance of Quality Materials

Let's face it—artists are at a disadvantage trying to sell unique handmade products in a brutal economy—unless you are willing to discount price your work like Walmart. So if your mugs, plates, vases, sculptures, etc. can't be the cheapest bargain on the block—they can be beautiful, long-lasting and of the highest quality possible. There's your advantage. But how can you guarantee consistency, quality and performance out of your pieces? By putting the best materials possible into your work.

Here at SMC, we're super-picky about materials. We don't change formulas based on market price fluctuations, we never bring inferior materials in from overseas, and we won't substitute ingredients to cut corners. We only use the very best chemicals and colorants, to ensure consistency and predictable quality in our formulas. Using our clays and glazes, you can always feel confident that you have the best products available.

If you purchase materials to make your own clays and glazes, you still benefit from this philosophy. We don't carry a dozen different grades of red iron oxide or rutile, we only carry ones we trust in our products. We sell you the same high-quality ingredients. We won't carry, and won't sell you, materials that aren't good enough to use ourselves.

It's also true that time is money. If we have to test, and retest, materials because we keep switching them—we're losing money. If you have to throw away pieces because they are firing/glazing unpredictably—you're losing money. Ensuring quality and consistency benefits both us as the producer and you as the consumer, saving us all time, energy and, most of all, money.

Why this approach? Because our clays and glazes, like your art, can only come out as good as what goes in. And our “art”—our top quality products—are going to be the best foundation on which to create your work. Spend your valuable time creating your work—all the while knowing the same integrity and consistent performance, will be coming from your (our) materials.

Fortunately, clays don't have to be only coarse or smooth, soft or firm. There are many bodies that fall “in-between,” and they can be ideal for many projects and a variety of work styles. At SMC, we also have bodies that are similar in color but are very different in texture and consistency—so that you aren't limited in your choices when looking for just the right type of clay for you.