



# Latest and Greatest

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**W**e had such a great start to the year, and a fantastic time at the 2011 Alabama Clay Conference! While enjoying Mardi Gras festivities in Mobile, SMC got to see a lot of clay friends, and meet a lot of new artists that were very excited about SMC's products. To know that we have a continuously growing group of potters looking for consistent, high quality and compatible products; and accessible, expert information on how to enjoy them the most—that's what motivates us. Because that's exactly what SMC is here for!



## FEATURED GLAZE...



This choice was easy—why of course, it's Mardi Gras! Just in time to celebrate Fat Tuesday, SMC is having a great sale on its most dynamic cone 6 glaze—Mardi Gras!

A multi-dimensional finish, **Mardi Gras (#490)** has tons of movement and depth that changes dramatically on each clay body. It's sparkly, speckled and sheer finish makes a great accent for surface texture or design. Its exciting and ever-changing color can run from turquoise to navy blue and olive green. Great when used alone, Mardi Gras also makes a fantastic, sparkly modifier for a variety of other SMC glazes.



Now through April 30, enjoy **20% off** the purchase of any pint or 1-gallon size bucket of Mardi Gras. Simply mention coupon code "**SMC2490**" and receive this special discount. Mardi Gras, like all of SMC's cone 6 glazes, is food-safe when applied and fired properly.

## SMC Glazing Tip:

Has this happened to you? After taking all the time to texture or carve the surface of a piece—you pull it out of the kiln only to discover that your glaze application has "eaten" your design. Few things are more frustrating than knowing your hard work and creative talent are buried under an opaque or heavy glaze finish. Is the only answer to leave the clay bare, or only use a light, monochromatic finish? No!

There are some fun techniques that you can use to accent a variety of surface textures. If your design was created with carvings—take one glaze in a syringe and inlay it into the carved area. You can either leave the high area bare, brush glaze only on the high points with a second glaze, or cover the entire piece with a second glaze and let the two glazes modify each other.

If your texture was created with stamps, texture mats or rollers—you can also easily achieve a unique layered look. Simply apply the first glaze with a brush, working it into all of the low points and texture. Allow adequate drying time, then lightly rub the surface with a damp sponge (removing the glaze from the high points on the design). Again allow adequate drying time, and apply your secondary glaze to a normal thickness.

In both situations, the glazes will modify each other and accent your surface texture without creating a really thick layer of glaze. But leaving clay bare is only recommended for the outside of functional ware, or on decorative work. Due to variations in firing ranges and schedules, and clay/glaze fit, SMC always recommends using a liner glaze on functional pieces.

**Don't forget!** SMC also sells a wide array of raw materials for making your own clay and glaze. With competitive prices and top-notch quality, SMC can fill all of your chemical needs. Our selection and prices are available online at [www.stonemountainclay.com](http://www.stonemountainclay.com), you can also be a fan and stay up to date with Stone Mountain Clay & Glaze on [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/stonemountainclay)

**NEW AT  
SMC...**

**Gilded Merlot (#420)!**

This rich and opaque cone 6 glaze boasts a glossy burgundy finish. Breaking to a gold where thin, Gilded Merlot holds its color on any SMC clay body, even our two black stonewares. Speckled clays look fantastic wearing the Gilded Merlot, their spots show through with a unique color and variation. Gilded Merlot works well when used over Rose Quartz (#461), and under Topaz (#443) and Butterscotch Spice (#411).



Another fantastic addition to the SMC cone 6 line is **Hydrangea (#419)**. Breaking from sage green to blue to deep violet-purple, Hydrangea creates a dynamic, multi-dimensional finish on textured pieces.

Love the look of raw clay, but want to ensure you make the most of your surface texture? Try a red iron oxide wash on the piece after the bisque firing. SMC sells red iron oxide dry by the pound. But for those of us who don't like the hassle of dry chemicals, SMC now sells a ready-to-use Red Iron Oxide Wash. Rich in color and made from top quality materials, SMC's **RIO Wash** is the perfect consistency to brush on bisqueware. It's simple-lightly sponge the surface of your piece once the RIO Wash has dried, and every detail will be highlighted. Ideal for leaf impressions, RIO Wash can be used alone or under glazes for a variety of effects. It can also be applied on greenware and leatherhard work (like a slip). RIO Wash won't stick to kiln shelves and can be used to sign the bottoms of your pieces.



## SMC Clay Tip:

Smooth rims and edges! We all work hard for them...but what's the best thing to use? SMC's answer is simple-a chamois. Use a chamois on the rim when finishing wet or leatherhard pieces, the material works to compress and smooth the fine particles of clay and can drastically reduce the appearance of grog in more coarse clays.

Sponges, though, will have the opposite effect. Running a sponge along your rim or around the floor and other surfaces of your piece will actually pull away the fine clay particles-and expose the grog in your piece even more. For smooth rims and edges, a sponge is not the answer. However, for an interesting texture and effect-sponging the piece will make the clay appear rougher and more earthy. Extensive sponging can create a unique look for decorative pieces (especially when using a dark and/or speckled clay body).

**Just a thought...** A big piece of the pottery puzzle is your kiln. A kiln that fires accurately and evenly can drastically impact the quality and consistency of your finished pieces. Just like with a car, it's important to service your kiln from time to time-replacing elements, thermocouples and relays when needed. It's a good idea to keep a kiln log, and record firing times and max temps for bisque and glaze. This can help tip you off to problems with the kiln, often firings will become longer or inconsistent when parts are wearing out. Pay close attention to the appearance of your pieces as well-if bisqued pieces start accepting glaze oddly, or glaze-fired pieces have clay or glaze that doesn't look right-it may be a sign that something is wrong with your kiln. Many kiln repairs are simple, and can be done on your own. If you do not know how to repair a kiln, we recommend you contact the manufacturer or locate a kiln repair person in your area.

## Ordering Glazes: Wet vs. Dry

Like many glaze manufacturers, we offer our fantastic glazes in both wet and dry form. Sometimes, it's difficult to decide which is more cost-effective, easier to use, and a better deal all-around. So, from our perspective, here's the lowdown:

**Dry:** Typically 10 lbs. of dry glaze will yield approximately 1.25 gallons of wet glaze. Since you are mixing the glaze yourself, you can select what type of bucket to use, making sure it's the ideal proportions for your dipping use.

Shipping dry glazes is easier-since you don't have to be concerned with the glazes freezing during the winter, and potential damage to the package may not be as detrimental to the contents. Shipping costs can be slightly lower, since water adds weight to the package. If you're buying the glazes in advance, dry glazes will have a longer shelf life.

**Wet:** When we mix wet glazes, we often add the dry materials to the batch in a specific order, depending on our experience with how they dissolve into the water. Some glazes like to be mixed a little thicker or thinner than others, and since we know the glazes best-we can mix them accordingly.

SMC always blends our glazes on a high-speed mixer for a minimum of 4 hours. This ensures optimum mixing and absorption of all of the materials, and helps them stay better blended in the long term. We also always add a suspender to our wet glazes, a step that we cannot take with a dry glaze batch.

We recommend that you take all of the above factors into account when planning your SMC glaze purchase. Consider your workspace, supplies, planned projects and available time. This will help ensure you're purchasing the glazes in the format that's best for you!