



Latest and Greatest

July/August 2011

Volume 2, Issue 4

W hew! We did it! Our first full year is under our belts, and we're anxiously embracing the second year. Thanks to everyone who came out and celebrated SMC's 1st birthday, your continued support and encouragement affirms that we are on the right track. We've perfected our production process, and created many exciting new formulas along the way. SMC will continue to focus our resources and energy on our unique, custom products—making the highest quality clays, glazes and slips in the most affordable fashion possible. And by also making our own high quality dry materials available to you—SMC further ensures that your pottery experience is a positive one. What can you expect from us next? Stay tuned...

New Store Hours to Better Serve You!

As many of you already know, SMC's retail showroom has traditionally not been open on Mondays. We've always used the first day of the week to focus solely on production. But now, due to high customer demand, our retail showroom is open on Mondays from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Our showroom and production center hours are as follows:

Mon: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Tues-Fri: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sat: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

When you visit us at SMC, be sure to take a peek around at all of the new fired clay and glaze samples being added to the showroom every day. Tips on SMC product usage and application techniques are always available!

NEW AT SMC... *202 Snow White Stoneware.* Enjoy the gorgeous, clean and bright glazed finish of porcelain with the delight of working in stoneware! #202 is a very smooth, very white and user-friendly stoneware. We recommend you fire #202 between cones 6-10; it's great for both functional and decorative work, throwing and handbuilding.



246 Speckled Brick Stoneware. A deep reddish-brown base, #246 boasts a light freckling of large black speckles. This rich and subtly-spotted stoneware is great for all types of work—and is beautiful glazed or unglazed. Vitrifies at cone 6, fires up to cone 8.



FEATURED GLAZE...

#461 Rose Quartz

It's alright, I'll say it: Best. Glaze. Ever. #461 Rose Quartz is a subtle, marbled whitish-pink opaque glaze. Simple in texture and finish on its

own, Rose Quartz is ideal as a liner, base or overall glaze for many styles of work.

It's what SMC's Rose Quartz does when combined with other glazes that is remarkable. When applied over or under other glazes, Rose Quartz shifts, breaks and mottles everything it touches. And it does all of this modification without running. And the #461 is fabulous on our black stonewares.



Now through the end of July, save **20% off the purchase of any pints or 1-gallon buckets of #461 Rose Quartz.** Simply mention "SMC7461."

SMC Glazing Tip:

Cracking. Crawling. Peeling. Flaking. All problems that can plague potters as we attempt to apply glaze to our pot. And then you try to fire anyway, and pull that piece out of the kiln hoping for beauty and perfection-only to find blisters, bare spots, craters or crackles. Ugh. Instead of getting upset and spending hours trying to fix the piece, there are many tips and thoughts you can follow to help prevent these issues in the first place.

First of all, what causes such problems? Many different things, some common-some unusual. We'll walk through each problem and some of its more common causes, but keep in mind that every studio and kiln environment are different, and every firing can vary slightly. Variations can always effect your results.

Peeling/cracking/flaking during application: This can lead to bare spots on the final fired piece, and/or drips in the kiln. Most common cause? *Too much glaze applied too fast.* If brushing, allow ample drying time between coats. If dipping, shorten how long you hold the piece in the glaze. If pouring, you may want to **very slightly** thin the glaze with water to ensure less is being applied. There are several things that can also effect how much glaze your bisque absorbs: **1) Ambient humidity.** If your workspace is humid the drying time of your pieces, as well as glazes, can increase drastically. Allow longer time between coats when applying glaze during humid weather, use a dehumidifier or the A/C, even having a fan to speed drying will help somewhat. If you're trying to apply the glaze and it keeps "pulling away" from certain areas like the rim, and the glaze doesn't want to stick, it's a sign that your piece has too much moisture and you should wait before attempting to alter the glaze application.

2) Inadequate bisque-firing. SMC recommends a cone 04 bisque for all of our clays. SMC glazes are mixed to a consistency that is appropriate for pieces that have been bisqued at cone 04. If you bisque to a cooler temp, your pieces will be more thirsty and absorb more glaze. **3) Rinse your pieces before glazing.** Do it! We recommend rinsing off (not wiping) your pieces about 5-10 minutes before glazing. This will help them better absorb the appropriate amount of glaze, and remove any dust.

Inconsistent color and coat (thick/thin spots): Some of this problem can go back to drying. Think of glaze like nail polish (this is easier for the ladies, sorry guys!). The first coat may feel dry to the touch, but if it's not completely dry all the way through your second coat will not adhere or fire well. If you have glazed the outside or inside surface of a pot, touch an unglazed portion. If the bare clay feels cold to the touch, it's not dry. Attempting to glaze it at this point will often lead to problems with the glaze adhering evenly. Best thing you can do? Walk away. Allow ample drying time, then attempt to finger sand, add another coat of glaze, whatever is needed to get a more even coat.

If you are mixing dry glazes-keep in mind that inadequate blending, especially on the first mix, can also be the culprit of fired inconsistency. When you buy glazes wet from SMC, they've been blended for a minimum of 4 hours on a high-speed mixer. So even though you get a little less glaze in a 1-gallon bucket than a

10-lb. dry batch, you're getting the bucket as well as our experience and expertise in mixing.

Glaze peeling (on their own or when combined), or unexpected color change:

Often this can be an agreement issue-perhaps between two or more glazes, or the glaze(s) and the clay body. Although all brands of clay and glazes are made out of natural materials, we know that all irons and all feldspars are not created equal. Chemicals dug up in different places can have very different reactions. Variations in composition and quality can effect shrinkage, absorption, color and fit (both in the clay and glaze). That's why SMC designs our products are to work together, and why we make them out of the same, consistent, high-quality materials every time. And fortunately, SMC clays and glazes have enjoyed rave reviews in the compatibility department-working extremely well with most other brands of clay and glaze. That's why we always recommend creating test pieces on your own, and fire them in your kiln. That way you can predict what results you can expect each time. It's also why we have hundreds of fired samples in our retail showroom for you to see, touch and compare-when you visit you can look at each glaze and clay body used in a wide variety of combinations and firing methods.

One final, but big, thing that can effect your glaze performance-the manufacturing and storage process itself. Glazes are batched and made by humans, in large volume, and often stored in a variety of conditions. As a glaze manufacturer, SMC can give you the following guarantee on our glazes:

- ◆ All of our glazes are manufactured by the same trained team. Every batch.
- ◆ Every SMC wet glaze batch is test-fired on the same clay, on the same program in the same kiln, to ensure that there were no errors in the production process.
- ◆ Our glazes are NEVER allowed to freeze when stored onsite, we take great care that they do not freeze during transport to you or to an SMC distributor.
- ◆ SMC does not substitute materials in our clay or glaze formulas. Ever. We won't even switch one type of red iron oxide for another (out of hundreds tried, we deem only two good enough for our products). No substitutions, no cut corners, always the highest quality. Every load, every time.

Become an SMC fan on

