



# Pot Melt Tutorial

By

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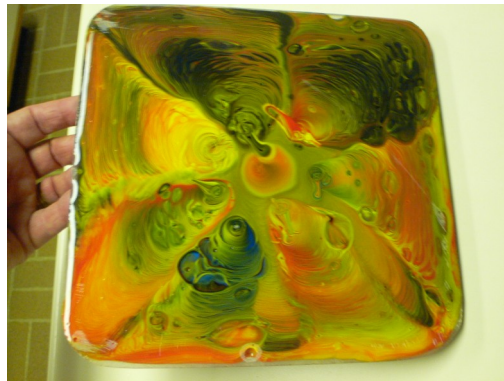
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Pot melts can be done in a few ways.....one way is to support the pot over a heavily kiln washed shelf with stilts. I use regular kiln stilts with a slice of kiln shelf across them. (An old broken kiln shelf will slice easily with a wet tile saw.) Fill the pot with scrap glass and fire up the kiln. ( Firing schedules later!) As the glass gets hot it will drip onto the shelf making a mix of colors and a “basic “ melt. The shape will be irregular and you have to be sure that the stilts are spread far enough apart that the melting, spreading glass will not touch them.

Another way to do a melt is to drop the glass into a prepared stainless steel ring. I prefer this way. Not only do you end up with a better form but it also will take away the chance of hitting those stilts. Your pieces can also be thicker if that is what you are looking for. The stainless steel form needs to be placed on your kiln washed shelf with 1/8” thick fiber paper around the inside of the stainless. (Not thin fire) Overlap the joint slightly. Always cut the fiber paper with a straight edge so that the fiber is sitting flat on the kiln shelf with no gaps. Do not use fiber paper under it as it can travel with the melting glass and push it into the glass itself when it is melting. Also do not kiln wash the stainless steel ring. It is not necessary. Here is a picture of a single pot sitting above a 10 x 10 stainless steel form.



From the design in this piece you can see that there were 7 holes in that pot. You can also see how dark colors can really dominate a melt. In a side fire kiln like the Skutt in this picture you can fire a pot melt on each level that you can fit.

Another way is to have the kiln shelf braces directly sitting across the stainless steel as in the next picture. The different heights of the falling glass will give you a slightly different look. The higher the pot the thinner the stream of glass.



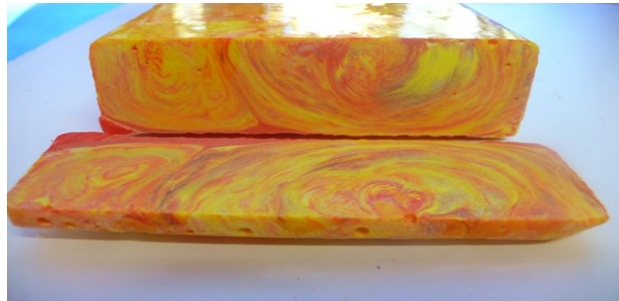
This photo is taken in my top loading Genesis kiln. I have each pot melt set up on a small kiln shelf only because my larger shelf was not dry at this moment.....These small shelves are sitting right on the kiln brick. As you can see I pile the glass high. Personally I use a lot of opaques and whites mixed in. Be sure to take notes on every load. I use the pots over and over again choosing to use the same colors. There is always a little glass left in the pot after firing and those colors will drip into the next melt. That is one reason customers like to buy their pot melt pots in sets of 3.

Be sure to give your schedule enough time to empty the pot. If not, the glass may crack the clay when it cools down.

Another great use of the pot melt technique is to make pattern bars. Using a stainless steel pattern bar former prepare it the same way that you would prepare a stainless steel ring or square. Here is a photo of a pattern bar that is 10" long by 3 1/2" wide and 2" deep with 2 pots on it and a 8" long by 3 1/2" wide and 2" deep with one pot. Your 1/8" thick fiber paper should cover the entire inside edge overlapping any joints. (not in this picture) Pile the glass into your pot and fire away. (Do not only use thin shelf paper)



Here are a couple of pot melt pattern bars. You can get a feel for the possibilities here. The colors mix so nicely in the depth of the pattern bar. Cut them with a wet tile saw. Use a fine grinder bit on the surfaces that come into contact with the saw blade and clean very very well before firing them again. Do not let the slices get dry between slicing and cleaning. You can use these slices in many different applications. If after 1 firing your bars are not as thick as you want....refill the pot and fire again!



As you are slicing them you can match them into mirror images as shown below. Here is another trick that can be a great look. Before putting the filled pot onto your stainless former put some scrap glass onto the kiln shelf within the fiber walls. So lets say you put red opaque unevenly across the pattern bar space. Then place your pot onto the stainless as in the picture above. You will find after firing, when you are slicing up your bar, that the color scrap that you put onto the shelf can now be a great center of a "mirror image" look. It will be a solid against the other swirling colors.



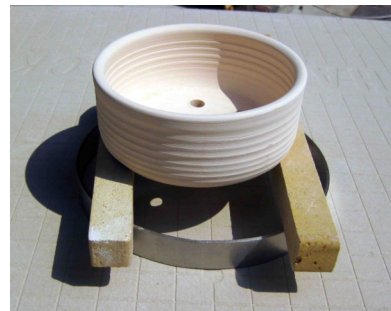
## Firing Schedules for Pot Melts

(for COE 90)

- 250 degrees an hour to 1100 hold 15 minutes
- 450 degrees an hour to 1685 hold 60 minutes
- 9999 to 1520 hold 15 min (to smooth it out)
- 9999 (as fast as kiln will go) to 900 hold 3 hours
- 100 to 800 hold 1 hour
- 100 degrees an hour to 650 hold 15 min off
- Do not open to peek -leave till cool



You can sit your pot melt pot right on the stainless steel for support. Just be sure to calculate the amount of glass you use. You can also put it up on supports to have the glass drop farther for a different look. Of course these forms still need 1/8" thick fiber paper before firing!



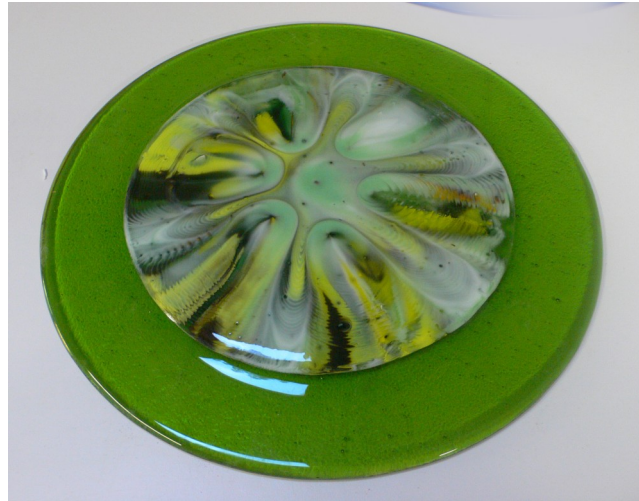


Here is another great way to use potmelts using a round stainless steel ring. Take the fired pot melt and ground the edges very carefully finishing with a very fine bit and cleaning extremely well. Grind down any imperfections in the top such as strings of glass that did not totally melt. If it is perfect you can skip the next step. I like to refire the melt with a sheet of clear on top slightly larger without a ring or dam. It will spread a little so allow for that if it is very thick. Fire very slowly as this is a thick already fired piece of glass! This sheet of clear will give it extra depth. (You do not have to do this step!)

100 degrees an hour to 1100  
 50 degrees an hour to 1250 hold 45 min  
 250 degrees an hour to full fuse (we use 1460).  
 9999 > 900 hold 3 hours (anneal for 90)  
 100degrees an hour > 800 hold 60 min  
 100degrees an hour > 700 hold 15 min

Next we take a colored 18" round (or whatever size you want the finished piece to be) and cover it with a round of clear. Put it on a well kiln washed kiln shelf. Then place the pot melt in the exact center. (very clean of course) Fire this extra slow. It is a lot of glass but worth it!!!!

80 degrees an hour > 1000 hold 15  
 50 degrees an hour > 1250 hold 30  
 250 degrees an hour to 1460 hold 15  
 9999 > 900 hold 3 hours  
 100 degrees an hour > 800 hold 60  
 100 degrees an hour > 700 hold 15  
 100 degrees an hour > 600 off  
 Do not open till room temperature



### Below...before and after 8 1/2 inch round melt

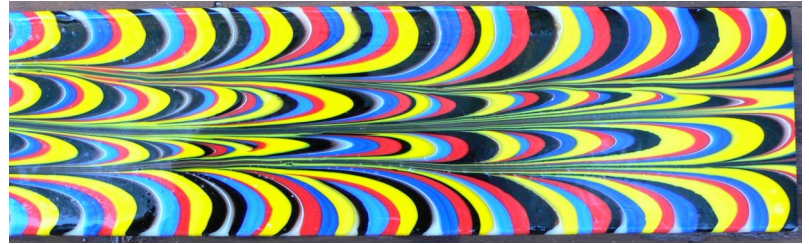


Get the most out of your kiln load by firing as many melts in as you can.

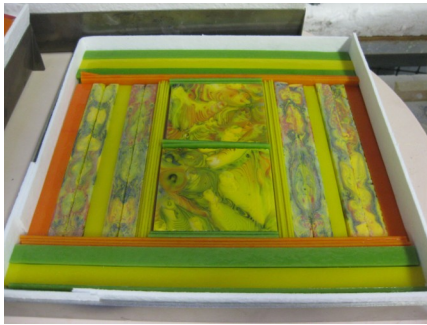


Here is one that was done like above then cut in half to make 2 gorgeous menorahs.

# Other way to use your stainless steel rings!!

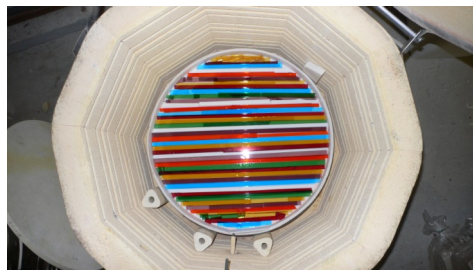


Combing in a pattern bar form and a 12 1/2" x 12 1/2" square. Combed pattern bars are wonderful as they are or sliced!



Left picture.....Stainless steel formers are great for building thicker pieces from pot melts and pattern bars. Also great for strip pieces.

Stainless steel formers make combing so much easier!



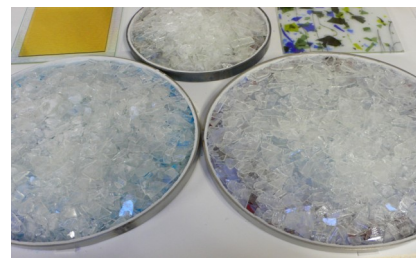
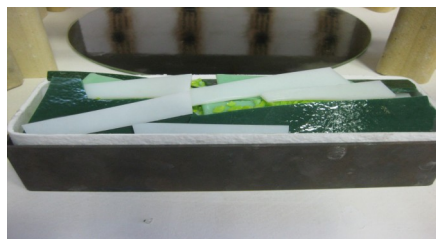
Left—ready to fire stripes in a 14 1/2" ring.

Right—Red hot after combing.



Pattern bar filled and ready to fire below.

Below... Scrap melts.....a great way to use up all that scrap in your studio!



Before and after combing in a 14 1/2" square



**FUN!!  
FUN!!  
FUN!!**