



My First Favorite Art Glass Object of Desire

Chapter I

I am always asked the question, "How long did it take you to assemble such a vast and varied collection?" Susan is always asked, "Who dusts all of this?" The answers are easy. My grand passion for collecting Carder Steuben glass began about six years ago, aided by luck, timing and internet relationships with dealers and other collectors willing to part with a piece or two of their prized pieces. And I dust it all. Susan attempts to turn our glass museum into a home for the people who live in it. We don't always agree on which pieces should occupy "most favored status" in our household, but we both concede that we are running out of space to display these wonderful art glass treasures.

For many years, Susan and I collected mass produced black amethyst glass. This glass was manufactured by several American glass companies and was relatively easy to find. We loved these varied shapes and sizes and integrated these pieces into our decor using black as the accent color. We amassed a good-sized collection of about 800 pieces snatched from antique stores, flea markets and house sales. We shared the joy of the hunt and the fun of finding a really terrific new piece. We used the vases for flowers and the compotes for candy throughout our home. The decorating effect in our home was stunning.

The Carder Steuben transformation really began during a vacation trip to San Diego. We decided to go to the Del Mar Antique Show in hopes of finding some more black glass. Instead, I was captivated by an elegant gold iridescent bowl, perched simply and gracefully on a table in one of the booths. I couldn't stop looking at it. This was no ordinary piece of glass. There was some kind of a sorcerer's spell. I was mesmerized. The piece was extraordinary and clearly an astounding glass art achievement, beyond anything I had previously witnessed.

The dealer identified it as Steuben, called Gold Aurene. He had me hold it so I could touch and feel the quality of the glass. It was made in the twenties and designed by Frederick Carder for Steuben Glass Works. Although I longed to have it, the incredible asking price of \$2000 far exceeded any of my previous purchases. I walked away-hands empty, but mind filled with the imprint of this glorious piece of glass. I thought about this Gold Aurene bowl for months. I talked about it. I dreamt about it. I began researching Carder Steuben, buying books and learning as much as I could. The piece became my quest. Finally Susan said, "If you love it, you should buy it" (she always says that). So we flew out for the next Del Mar Antique Show and raced directly to the same dealer's booth.

There it sat, my magnificent Gold Aurene bowl, simple, classic and elegant. I bought it. It is still my most favorite piece of art glass. Well, okay, it was only the beginning of collecting my favorite art glass pieces.

The pieces, especially the rare ones, are difficult to find. As rewarding as that is, the real fun is the "hunt".

Alan Shovers
Evansville, Indiana
September, 2005



GOLD AURENE CENTERPIECE BOWL

5 ½ Inches High, 13 7/8 Inches Wide

Shape #2851, p. 142 Gardner, *Fn*

Fn. All shape numbers referred to are factory numbers. They can be found in the form of line drawings in, *The Glass of Frederick Carder*, by Paul V. Gardner, from pages 137 to 342.