

The Blooming Marble

The Heavenly Blue Morning-Glory (Ipomoea Violacea)

The first marble of a five part series

By Josh Grant

Photos by Jacob Tell

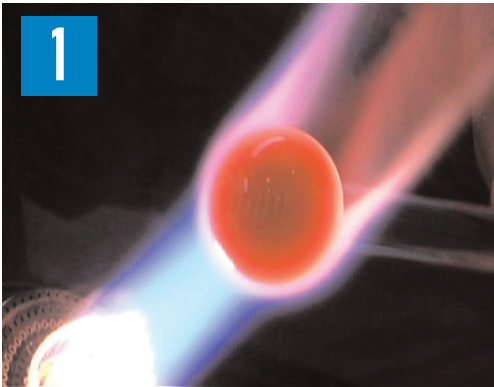


Materials:

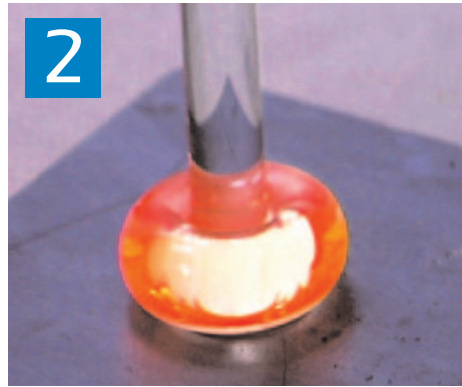
One 2mm stringer – Peacock Blue
One 2mm stringer – Silver Strike
One 2mm stringer – India Green
Two 8mm clear rod – 14 inches long
One 15mm clear rod – 16 inches long

Graphite Marver Pad
70% Isopropyl Alcohol
Tungsten Rake or Butter Knife
1.5 to 2 inch Marble Mold – Cherry-wood or Graphite

Before beginning, clean marver pad and all clear rod with alcohol and a rag (this will eliminate any dust and or graphite particles from contact with your marble). This ensures high optical quality in this piece.



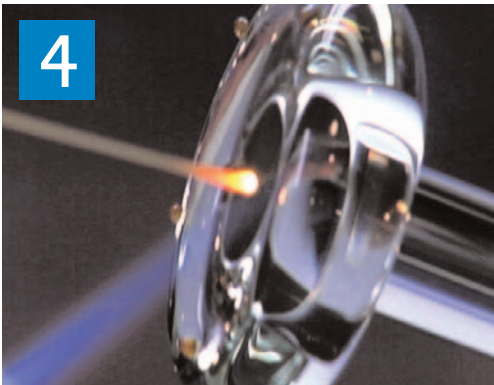
1
Take your piece of 15mm rod and heat first one inch to clean the cut end. Pull off the end to a blunt point with tweezers, and then remove any of the impurities (bubbles, scratches, etc) with a glass rod by wiping off in the flame. This is an important step to ensure a super clear magnifying effect.



2
Gather a ball approximately 2/3rds of the size of the finished marble you want to make. Once you have established an even heat base wait a second for your gather to form a cool skin and then marver a maria by pushing and spinning downward on your graphite pad. Spin and press slowly to keep your maria centered and even.



3
Fire polish the face of the maria, then apply four very small dots of butterscotch. In the center of the maria, heat slightly, then marver the dots in slightly.



4
Next, make five small dots with silver strike on the outside of the maria about one quarter inch in from the edge, make a pattern like five points of a star. Heat slightly, marver slightly.



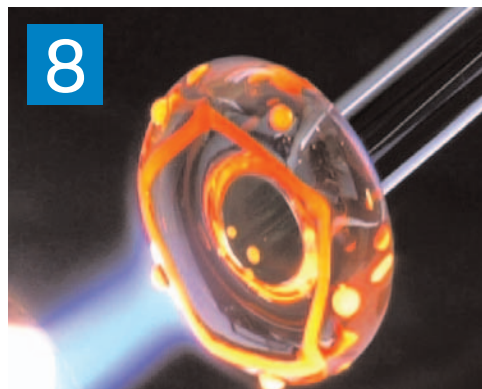
5
Now with peacock, draw a pentagon, starting and ending on the same dot of silver strike. This will hide your seam. The five corners of your pentagon should intersect on your five dots of silver strike.



6
Heat the corners and pull down with a knife or rake slightly (this brings the peacock and butterscotch together and makes a slight 'V').



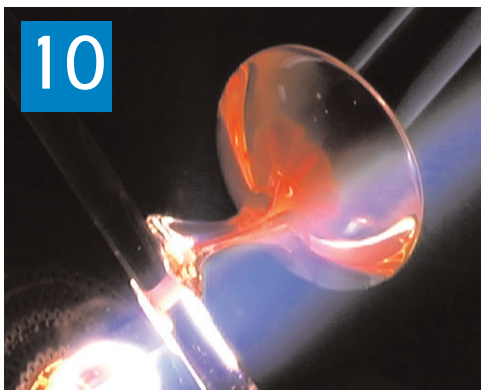
7 Heat face of maria for approximately five seconds while spinning, then marver slightly. Now add five green dots between the peacock and the edge of the maria. (The closer the dots are to the edge, the better the finished effect.)□



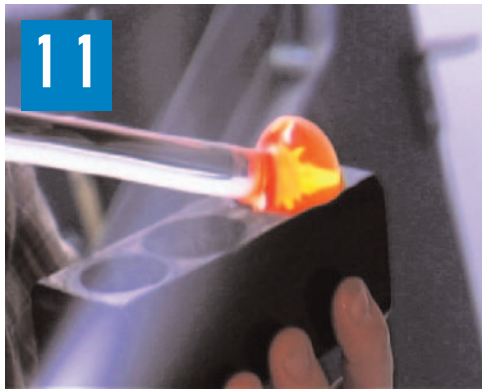
8 Now heat entire maria while spinning at a moderate to slow speed. Concentrate on the edge of the maria or the 'tread of the tire.' Heat the face alternately until it starts to condense and the edges begin to fall down around the center. Focus on letting the face point downward slightly while spinning slowly. This will begin to pull the design inward. Gently marver back into a maria and take care to keep your maria centered. Spin slowly while marvering.



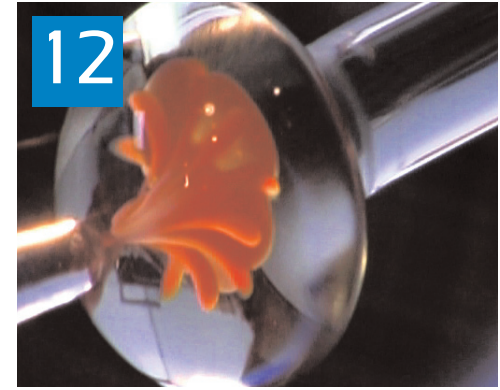
9 Reheat the maria as previously described and condense further. This will begin pulling the design inward. At this point, you will see the flower 'Blooming'—you will need to repeat this process four or five more times. The amount of pressure while marvering will determine how much your flower blooms/opens. Take care not to condense or marver too quickly as this will trap a bubble in the center.



10 Once the design has been completely pulled in and condensed, you will pull out the condensed in to a slight point to un-trap any bubbles and clean up the condensed point.



11 Now, round the back half of your marble in a mold.



12 Punty up to round the end with an 8mm rod (heat and roll the point of the 8mm rod to a cone before you punty up). Heat 15mm rod where it meets the marble. Heat and remove your 15mm rod making sure to leave just enough glass to complete the second half (the lens) of your marble.



13 Now round your entire marble in mold, and once it spins freely in the mold it should be close to perfectly round.



14 Let your finished marble cool enough to remove 8mm punty and fire-polish where punty was previously attached.

Finishing Tips: The smaller the contact point where your punty meets your marble, the less chance of leaving a nub to have to polish or remove. Before you put your marble in the kiln, make sure the surface is cool to prevent a flat spot. ENJOY!

Look for more of Josh Grant of Vetro Glasswork's marble series in upcoming issues of The Flow.