

1483 STANHOPE CREAM AND SUGAR

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I am a fan of Art Deco. Sleek geometry, stylish shapes, innovative color combinations, they all excite me to the heights of admiration.

Evidently, not everyone feels that way.

During its actual period of production, 1483 Stanhope never achieved the popularity that it deserved, a fact that has been noted several times in HCA publications. The pattern was featured only in one catalog, and that wasn't even a full-scale edition, but simply a 1937 supplement to Cat. 211 that had come out a couple of years earlier. The same supplement showed us many of the first illustrations of Ridgeleigh and Saturn, Coleport and Kohinoor. So that gives you an idea of the style they were pushing at the time. Notice, too, how Heisey took care in naming patterns directly from the factory, a practice that was sporadic before then. This, no doubt, enhanced commercial appeal. All the pattern pages of that supplement are reproduced in the Bredehoff color era book and most of them, including the Stanhope pages, are also in Vogel III.

Heisey wasn't the only company that was still advocating Art Deco designs in 1937, of course. The style may have been winding down, but it wasn't yet finished. I have a letter from Earl Newton, who was at the time the president of Imperial Glass Corporation. Just a month after Heisey published their 1937 supplement, Mr. Newton, working out of Chicago, sent a copy of it to Carl Uhrmann at the Imperial plant in Bellaire, Ohio. Carl was another of those Austrian glass makers who, like the Kralls, had become attached to American companies; he eventually became the last president of Imperial as an independent company. Earl seems to have been urging Carl in the same Art Deco direction, and throws in a little something to whet a competitive edge, too. For one thing, he says, "In the last two years they [Heisey] made 165 pressed moulds alone." (In the meantime, Imperial had introduced Candlewick, so they'd made a fair share of moulds, too.) He goes on to point out the Stanhope cigarette box "which you must admit is very good style." Evidently, Earl thought Stanhope was a good bet, too.

On a Chicago visit a year or so ago, Bob and I visited the Art Institute. Among their exhibits was one on mid-20th century home design. It included lamps, furniture, ceramics, and other incidental items. One designer's name was on several pieces. Of course, I'm thinking of Walter von Nessen, the designer of Stanhope. (No Stanhope was in the Chicago display; we did see some Stanhope displayed in the Dallas Art Museum's glassware exhibits, though.) Von Nessen was clearly at the forefront of design in the 1930's. In 2007 HCA's own Walter, that would be Ludwig, wrote about the Stanhope pattern and von Nessen's connection with it.

So here we have a major designer of the era presenting a great design. It wins awards. A major company likes it enough to put the design into production. Another major company uses it to stimulate their own ideas. And it falls flat. Well, nearly so. Stanhope is not a rare pattern, but it certainly is no Ridgeleigh. By the time the next full-scale catalog came out, 1483 Stanhope was nowhere to be seen.

One of the saving graces for the pattern, and for cream and sugar collectors, was a promotion through General Electric. Buy a coffee maker and you get elegant glass. To this day, glass included in this deal, the Stanhope cups and saucers, 7" plates, and the cream and sugar are the most common pieces of Stanhope on the market. (The promotion itself was remarkable for Heisey. GE was higher end, so that made it more palatable to Heisey. In general, A. H. Heisey & Co. despised promotions. They felt such deals cheapened their glass. Their price lists admonished sellers against bargain come-ons in a don't-even-think-about-it manner. If there were going to be crumbs of rolled oats clinging to any glass, let it be Imperial's.)

The Stanhope pattern is characterized by perfectly round, pierced handles, with or without inserts and those unmistakable ridges sweeping and swooping around each piece. The handles are seldom set directly on the body of the piece. Instead, they attach either to a horizontal bar projecting outward or to a vertical bar alongside the piece.

The cream and sugar (you thought I'd never get to them, didn't you?) are usually found today either with black button knobs in the handles, the ones used for the General Electric promotion, or with no knobs at all. They were sold either with or without

knobs. Red, blue, ivory, or green button knobs are available, but be prepared to put in time and dollars to add them to your collection, especially for those last two. (Yellow knobs have been mentioned, but have never been seen so far as I know. Perhaps these were the same as the ivory ones. On the other hand, the trade journal article which mentions the yellow ones doesn't say anything about green. Maybe the trade journal just got it wrong.)



The cream and sugar set comes in only one shape and size. No oval sets were made in the pattern, and no companion butter or spooner. So passé. By this time, Heisey had nearly dropped the terms “hotel cream” and “hotel sugar” but the Stanhope pieces are about the size of the earlier hotel sets. It is somewhat surprising that there isn't an individually sized set, since these were made in most other patterns of the time. It particularly raises eyebrows when you realize that the Stanhope design appears to have inspired 1495 Fern, where there are creams and sugars in both regular and individual sizes. In a way, Stanhope anticipates Cabochon, since a Stanhope cream or sugar has a round bottom but a squarish top, the reverse of the Cabochon pieces. Stanhope also has a relationship with Crystalite, but I'll save that discussion for another time.

As for finish, 1483 Stanhope was meant to be simple. The cream, like most Heisey creams, has a

hand-tooled spout, so you will find a little variation there. Creams and sugars have ground rims on the bases, but otherwise are fire-polished. I've never seen an unmarked one; the mark appears on the underneath side of the bottom.

Heisey offered the cream and sugar decorated. Among etchings, there are 490 Maytime, 491 Frosty Dawn, 494 Swingtime, and 605 Frosted. Cuttings include 868 Minaret, 880 Salem, 881 Kashmir, 882 Yorkshire, 883 Royal York, and possibly a few others. Unfortunately, hardly any of these decorations have an Art Deco flavor other than 605 Frosted etching, and perhaps 491 Frosty Dawn or 868 Minaret if you stretch it a bit. For a Deco fan's taste, at least, the decoration styles clash with that of the glass itself. I haven't seen other companies' work on Stanhope creams and sugars, but they may well exist.

I have not heard of the cream or sugar ever being seen in color. We know of a stray piece or two of Stanhope in Sahara, and even experimental blue. The blown stemware was made in Zircon in the 1930's (and again in Limelight in the 1950's). But the cream and sugar seem never to have made it into color lines. Frankly, I think Zircon with black handles or Sahara with red ones would have been just the ticket. If you have a set like that, don't write—call. Operators are waiting.

Vital Statistics:

1483 Stanhope cream and sugar

Sugar: Height (highest point), 3 1/8"; Width (top, side to side), 3 1/2"; Width (handle to handle), 6"; Base diameter, 2 1/2".

Cream: Height (highest point), 4"; Width (top, side to side), 3"; Width (spout to handle), 5"; Base diameter, 2".

Does Stanhope push your buttons? Do you have a great story of discovery? My buttons can be pushed at heisey@embarqmail.com.