

#473 Narrow Flute with Rim Sugars and Creams

A. J. Sanford designed Narrow Flute with Rim, displaying again his unmatched elegance of taste. I marvel at how the pattern manages to be both classical and modern all at once. The many fine ribs dazzle in the light, while the wide, plain rims give each piece formality and serenity.

A problem with all those ribs, of course, is they give so many opportunities for nicks and flakes, so condition can be an issue with the pattern. The pristine pieces are out there. You just have to be persistent. In feeling a piece over thoroughly, the finicky collector must be as dedicated and meticulous as a well-groomed cat. (I groomed our cats last week. I coughed up hair balls for days.)

As with any self-respecting large pattern, Narrow Flute with Rim is blessed with several variations on creams and sugars. (A.H. Heisey & Co., as well as other makers, always referred to these pairings in the reverse order, namely, "sugar and cream." That was true from the company's beginning right up to the end. But even in the early days of the company, popular usage seems to have preferred the opposite order. It is a point on which I feel no need to be consistent. If that troubles you, you can always call 1-800-WHO-CARES.) Narrow Flute with Rim encompasses four pattern numbers, from 472 through 475. Fortunately, all the sugars and creams are in #473, so at least we don't have that matter to confuse us. On the other hand, there is an unprecedented variety of shapes, some unique to this pattern and never repeated afterward by Heisey. I've included a photo that shows all of them together, just so you can see the variety at a glance. There is one piece missing from the photo, but we'll get to that in a moment.

#473 Narrow Flute with Rim cream and sugar items. Clockwise from top, hotel cream in loaf sugar tray, 4-oz. individual cream in dice sugar tray, individual cheese and cracker (strawberry and sugar), individual sugar with 3-oz. individual cream, individual sugar and cream stack set, hotel sugar without cover.



Narrow Flute with Rim came to market about 1915. The big table sets were on their way out by then, so you won't find a covered butter or spooner in the pattern. For that matter, there is no table-size sugar or cream. Despite that, there is a piece that could easily be mistaken for a large, square sugar. That is the **covered marmalade**. What is unusual about the Narrow Flute with Rim marmalade is that the cover has no spoon slot. In some other patterns the spoon slot is the only thing that distinguishes a sugar from a marmalade. In fact, I can't think of another marmalade that *doesn't* have a spoon slot in the cover. So it would be natural to suppose the table-sugar-sized #473 marmalade is something else. However, the catalog illustration we have doesn't show a spoon slot and I don't think I've ever seen a Narrow Flute with Rim marmalade cover that did have one. Making it even more strange, when the moulds were re-cut to fashion the Ridgeleigh marmalade Heisey realized their omission and added a cut-out to the lid.

Having no table-sized creams or sugars, the largest free-standing set in #473 is the **hotel sugar and cream**, the size typically one step down from table sets. (By this time, many patterns were made *only* in the hotel size.) It's a good thing there are no spooners in Narrow Flute with Rim, because the hotel sugar could easily be mistaken for one. Its proportions, relatively tall and narrow for a sugar, are more like a spooner. Both cream and sugar are perfectly cylindrical, as wide at the bottom as at the top. The cream has a hand-pulled spout; that is, it came out of the mould



Marmalade: Unusual in having no spoon slot, this could be mistaken for a table sugar.



Hotel cream and sugar, unknown decoration similar to Wheeling D-2.

with no spout at all, looking like a mug, but while the glass was soft, a worker formed the spout. In Catalogue 100, the hotel set is shown with a cover on the sugar, but with a note that the sugar is "also furnished without cover." In other catalogs the set has no cover and no mention of one. This is not the only pattern offered both ways. (See *Heisey News*, July, 2013, "The Great Cover-Up, or, Sugars Exposed.") However, the lid for the Narrow Flute with Rim hotel sugar is especially hard to find, even compared to other sets that came with or without covers. I'm told one is lucky to have the Narrow Flute with Rim hotel sugar at all. In my own experience, I found the hotel cream years before I came across a sugar. I'm still waiting for a cover. That is the piece that is missing from the group photo.



4-oz. individual cream with 5-in. dice sugar tray.

The hotel cream served another purpose in this pattern. You may recall in the Domino sugar article (April, 2013) I mentioned that there was one Domino sugar that Heisey didn't call by that name. That is the tray in the **loaf sugar and cream set**. There is no question that the set was intended for Domino sugars. A Heisey ad from 1921 (see p. 22) shows the loaf set holding them, all perfectly arrayed around the cream in the center, fitting just so. I don't know why Heisey abandoned the term "domino." If anything, Heisey added confusion. Even more exasperating, a 1915 ad shows what is labeled a loaf sugar holding, not Dominos, but cubed (dice) sugar. Possibly the 1915 ad mislabeled the set, or possibly Heisey didn't really care what you put in them.

Loaf sugar was the hard, moulded, bulk form that an earlier generation bought, before cubes, dominos, or sacks of granulated sugar were widely available. In some parts of the world, it is still the way sugar is sold. Typically, a sugar loaf was torpedo-shaped (think Sugar Loaf Mountain, Rio de Janeiro), and sugar nips or other tools were used to cut off what you needed. In 1916, when Heisey's set was patented, some people would have still remembered those old sugar loaves. Surely that wasn't the image Heisey was going for, so perhaps they were trying to distinguish the "loaf" set from the linear trays they did call dominos.



A sugar loaf and sugar nips (photos courtesy Creative Commons).

Heisey ad from the April 1915 issue of *American Cookery*

Another confusing thing is that this set was illustrated in at least one catalogue as an “8-in. loaf sugar and cream set.” There is nothing 8” about the loaf sugar tray. The diameter is about 6 3/8”, and handle to handle it measures 9”. Heisey made no sugar tray that was 8” in diameter. The price lists clear up the mistake, though, since they call it a 6-in. loaf set.

Heisey *did* make a sugar tray that was 8” handle to handle, and that is the tray in the **dice sugar and cream set**. But how did they describe the size of this smaller set? Five inches. And sure enough, the diameter of the dice sugar tray is about 5 3/8”. So there’s no doubt the catalog caption for the loaf sugar was just an error. The dice sugar and cream set is intended to hold sugar cubes. Yet again, Heisey ignored the perfectly good, well-used term and went for something different.

Of course, the dice sugar tray needed a cream. The hotel cream was too large, so Heisey created a **4-oz. individual cream** to go in the center. This cream has no free-standing individual sugar partner. The cream was sold either separately or as part of the dice set but that was all. Just as the dice sugar is a miniature of the loaf sugar, the 4-oz. cream is scaled down from the hotel cream. Just like the larger piece, the smaller cream is straight-sided with a hand-pulled spout. The dice set is available in Moongleam, usually in one of the early, deep shades that are nearly indistinguishable from Emerald, sometimes even glowing as brilliantly under ultraviolet. There is a collector’s price guide listing the set in Flamingo, but I suspect that is theoretical only. Price List 209 goes to some trouble to show a number of items available in both Moongleam and Flamingo, carefully omitting Flamingo mid-list when it gets to the dice sugar and cream set. I’m sure one of you will gleefully correct me if you have a Flamingo set at hand. A couple of Heisey’s price lists raise the interesting possibility that the Moongleam dice sugar was offered with a crystal cream, but I see no evidence for it the other way around.



Loaf sugar and cream set (hotel cream and 6-in. tray); dice sugar and cream set (4-oz. cream and 5-in. tray).

The sugar trays, both the 6-in. loaf size and the 5-in. dice size, have counterparts lacking the center rings that hold the creams in place. The 6-in. size with no center ring is called a 2-handled cheese dish, and the 5-in. size is a 2-handled jelly. It was just a matter of changing plungers when moulding the glass that gave you one or the other.

The idea of a sugar tray with a center-held cream was never explored any further by Heisey. Other companies tried the same thing. Every so often, one sees a sugar tray that is the same size as the 6" loaf sugar tray, but with plain sides, no narrow flutes. The handles are nearly identical to the ones Heisey used. The plain-sided trays I have seen are either in a pink that could nearly pass for soft Flamingo or in an acidic turquoise hopped up on uranium that gives it a brilliant glow under ultraviolet but that looks nothing like Moongleam. When seen with a cream, it is a very plain cream that looks as though it should be Yeoman, but isn't. This set is not Heisey. Genuine Heisey sets are marked, frequently if not always, and usually in the centers, with patent dates to boot. Some sugar trays, however, have been seen with no mark in the center, the <H> obscurely placed off to the side along the rim.

Not willing to leave well enough alone, Heisey made two other creams that were called individual, each with an accompanying sugar. There was the **3-oz. individual cream and sugar set** and the **squat individual sugar and cream set**. We've already looked at the squat set, because this is none other than one of the stacking sets mentioned back in February, 2013. I've already pointed out in that article how the squat set is unusual in having rounded handles, rather than the square ones favored for most of the Narrow Flute with Rim pattern. The 3-oz. individual cream and sugar set is somewhat taller and has square handles, so can't be confused with the squat set. On the other hand, the 3-oz. cream is shorter and blockier than its 4-oz. counterpart, so there should be only minimal chances for mixing up those two. The 3-oz. cream has a moulded spout, although the very tip is probably hand-pulled. Both the individual sugar and cream taper outward slightly, so the tops are wider than the bottoms. The round-handled squat set taper inward slightly.



3-oz. individual cream and individual sugar.

Also back in the stack set article, I mentioned how the 3-oz. cream mould was used to make the individual syrup that is included in the griddle cake set. The only difference between the two is that the syrup has an added thick inset disk on the bottom to enable it to sit inside the griddle cake cover. I needed to bring it up again, though, because I have a **correction**: I made an error in the stack set article. I know, I was shocked, too. Back there, when mentioning the comparison between the cream and the syrup, I said that the 3-oz. cream was also used in the dice set. Of course, it was not; the dice sugar uses the 4-oz. cream. When I was working on that article, I was sometimes away from home going back and forth between my laptop and the main computer at home and the correction never made it into the final edition.

We aren't quite done with #473 Narrow Flute with Rim. One more piece, one that almost invariably draws exclamations attesting to its cuteness, is the **individual strawberry and sugar**, a one-piece item. I've never found confirmation in a factory-original primary source that Heisey truly offered it under this description. It is certain that Heisey sold the piece as an individual cheese and cracker, the only one they ever offered, but hardly anyone ever calls it that. When Clarence Vogel first encountered the piece, he had not located it in Heisey documentation. He only speculated in his newsletter that it was a strawberry and sugar. Nevertheless, it has been accepted as such by Heisey collectors, so I'll go ahead and include it here, even if its sweet and fruity status is dubious. The combination piece features a plate with a heavy stem in the center holding aloft a small tray. Not every cream and sugar collector would include this in the collection, but if you are looking for undeniable completeness, you surely wouldn't leave this piece out.

By the late 1920's, most Narrow Flute with Rim was no longer in production. While a 1924 price list shows most of the items, by about 1929 only the dice set was left, and it fell out of the price lists soon after. That means that other than the Moongleam dice set, the cream and sugar items are available only in crystal. There is some decorating, but



Individual syrup (left) and 3-oz. individual cream.

not a great deal. Some of the tray sets are found partially or entirely iridized, and almost any of the cream or sugar pieces can be found with various enamels applied to the rims. The cheese and cracker that everyone calls a strawberry and sugar is often found with cuttings, but none of these, so far as I know, originated at the Heisey plant.

Let's summarize. Narrow Flute with Rim has four creams, three free-standing sugars (one sometimes with a cover), two sugar trays, and one combination sugar-and-fruit item (or not). Three of the creams and two of the sugars were called "individual." They come together in five sugar-and-cream combinations, six if you allow for the sugar cover, and seven if you include the Moongleam combination. One of the sets stack. One of the creams was sometimes sold all on its own. Narrow Flute with Rim is nothing if not flexible. Something like a cat grooming itself.



Individual cheese and cracker (strawberry and sugar).

Vital Statistics

#473 Narrow Flute with Rim cream and sugar items

Hotel sugar—3 3/8" high, 2 3/4" diameter, 4 7/8" across handles

Hotel cream—3 3/8" high, 2 3/4" diameter, 4 1/8" spout to handle

Loaf sugar tray—7/8" high at rim, 1 1/2" high at handles, 6 3/8" diameter, 9" across handles

4-oz. individual cream—2 7/8" high, 2 3/8" diameter, 3 1/2" spout to handle

Dice sugar tray—7/8" high at rim, 1 1/2" high at handles, 5 3/8" diameter, 8" across handles

Individual sugar—2 1/4" high, 2 3/4" diameter (top), 2 3/8" diameter (bottom), 4 1/2" across handles

3-oz. individual cream—2 1/4" high, 2 1/2" diameter (top), 2 1/4" diameter (bottom), 3 3/4" spout to handle

Individual cheese & cracker (strawberry & sugar)—2" high, 6 1/2" diameter (plate), 2 3/4" diameter (center cup)

Individual cream, squat; individual sugar, squat—see *Heisey News*, February, 2013

All with ground and polished star bottoms. Usually marked in the inside center bottom except for a few very occasional trays. Trays frequently with patent notice "PAT. 6/20/16".

Some cats find a nice, big Heisey nappy improves their grooming posture immensely. Which Heisey makes you sit up and take notice? Let's compare notes at heisey@embarqmail.com.

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