

FIRE YOUR SPIRITS...



Georgies
CERAMIC AND CLAY CO.

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Using Georgies Raku Glazes

Georgies' unique raku glazes are ready to use. Brush, dip, pour or overlap for dramatic effects -- and remember that you can use the black color of the smoked clay body as a design element in your work. If you are using raku glazes for the first time, you will quickly find that there's more variation in their consistency than you may have seen with other ceramic glazes. This is due to differences in their formulas: they don't all use the same raw materials. **Always thoroughly mix raku glazes before use.**

Bisque & Dryfooting

Cone 04 is the "standard" bisque firing temperature. Some raku artists find that they have better results with bisque fired to cone 06 or cone 08, especially with smooth-textured lowfire clay bodies. The lower firing temperature leaves the clay less vitrified, more "flexible," and better able to withstand thermal shock.

Bisque that has been recently fired is ready for glazing. If your bisque has been collecting dust for a while, you may need to wipe it down with a *barely damp* sponge.

Dryfooting, or leaving the bottom of the piece unglazed (where it sits on the kiln shelf) is not as important in raku as in regular firing. Your pieces will not stay on the kiln shelf long enough for the glaze drips to "glue" them into place as they cool.

Dryfooting is still important, however, to avoid glaze spots or puddles on your kiln shelf where they may contaminate the next piece.

Many variables affect the color results of raku glazes: clay color, glaze application, firing & reduction conditions, weather, etc. Color variations are normal and to be expected. The most important question is if YOU like the color results you achieved, not whether they match our samples.

Raku glazes are never foodsafe due to their high concentrations of metallic oxides, and they are NOT watertight.

Glaze Application...

The desired consistency for raku glazes is roughly the same as milk, or a little thicker (like chocolate milk). If your glaze is too thick, thin it with water and stir thoroughly. If the glaze is too thin and watery, you may need to brush on more coats to reach the best application thickness. Application thickness is important because raku glazes are sensitive to it: too much or too little will change your color and texture results.

Optimum application thickness equals roughly half the thickness of a dime. It's more important to reach this thickness than to count the number of coats applied. Matte glazes often reach this thickness with only two brushed flowing coats. They work best when applied thinner than gloss glazes. Gloss glazes usually require three brushed flowing coats to reach this thickness.

You may find that you prefer thicker or thinner glazes, and glaze application, for your individual styles or techniques.

Specific Glaze Tips

- **PG801 and PG816** may be thick in the jar and may not flow very well in brushing, even after mixing. This is normal, due to their formulas. Apply in one brushed coat.
- **PG804** will crack, peel and curl as it dries. This is normal and expected for this glaze. If applied too thick, it will peel and curl right off your piece. To help the glaze stay on the piece before firing, apply AquaNet hairspray as the glaze dries. **DO NOT USE AEROSOLS ANYWHERE CLOSE TO YOUR KILN.**

Firing & Reduction

The sample pieces on Georgies' web pages were fired in propane-fueled kilns made from 20-gallon aluminum trash cans. We fired the pieces to glaze maturity at roughly cone 06.

We don't use pyrometers or witness cones in our firing, but monitor the kiln's progress by watching how the glazes change and melt. Most gloss glazes bubble up ("flux") as they melt, then smooth back down into coats of liquid glass. When the piece looks glossy and wet in the kiln, we know it's ready for reduction.

Matte raku glazes do NOT visibly flux in the same way as gloss raku glazes, but they do mature at the same firing temperature. When firing pieces with matte glazes, also fire a piece with gloss glazes so you can use the gloss glazes as a timer.

Georgies' sample pieces were reduced in 20-gallon aluminum trash cans, filled 1/3rd to 1/2-way with newspaper or office paper torn into half-inch strips, PLUS a double handful of dried leaves from local trees.

After the initial burst of flame when the hot pieces contacted the combustibles, we put the lids on the reduction cans and allowed our pieces to cool for 30-40 minutes.

Over a period of years, raku pieces may lose their metallic lusters and iridescences as the glaze pigments recombine with oxygen in the air. You can slow or prevent this process on gloss glazes by keeping them away from direct sunlight and by applying a sealer like Duncan's SS331 Clear Gloss. *Sealers will ruin the color effects of matte glazes.*

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