

Identifying the Simple Grape Patterns

By Walt Robinson

There is occasionally some confusion regarding the simple grape patterns: Fenton Vintage, Dugan Vintage Variant, and Millersburg Grape. You can refer to many sources and not end up with a clear method of distinguishing between some of these pieces. I offer the following in an attempt to clarify this situation.

Millersburg Grape: First, it is arguable as to whether or not this is a Millersburg product. The primary source for identifying it as Millersburg is the Standard Encyclopedia of Carnival Glass. However, this pattern is not included in Marie Magee's definitive Millersburg Glass book. After looking at the exceptionally poor quality marigold on every piece I have ever seen I decided to take a complete set to Marie Magee for identification. She indicated many reasons why this pattern cannot be attributed to Millersburg, not the least of which is that not one shard was ever found at the Millersburg site. Regardless of who produced them we do know that these pieces are somewhat radium and have a multipoint star in the base (which helps lead folks to the Millersburg conclusion). But the color quality, lack of evidence, and several other issues suggest they were manufactured elsewhere.

These bowls come in two sizes, both of which have a starred marie, and either of two edge treatments. They come primarily in a weak marigold. An occasional green or perhaps a weak amethyst may also be found. There appear to be no plates in this pattern. The larger bowl is always about 8 inches in diameter; it has five grape clusters and a paneled back. The smaller bowls are about 5 inches in diameter, have three grape clusters, and have a paneled back. Both sizes have a grape leaf on the interior bottom. The larger size resembles one of the Fenton Vintage products. The smaller size has no similarity with other products.



Millersburg Grape set with 3-n-1 edge treatment

Fenton Vintage: (Bowls only) The first thing that is not well understood is that Fenton made three distinct grape pattern variations that are all lumped under one heading. The most commonly found pattern has five grape clusters, a paneled exterior, a plain marie, and a large leaf in the interior base. It, ranges in size from a little over 5 inches to just over 9 inches in diameter, has many edge treatments, and can be confused at a glance with the Millersburg Grape pattern (except for the obvious plain marie).



Millersburg Grape comparison to 5 cluster Fenton Vintage

The second variation has six grape clusters, a paneled back, a starred marie, a large leaf in the interior base, and a definite break in the vine pattern. This pattern comes only in larger pieces generally 8 ½” to 10” depending on edge treatment. This is the variation that is confused with the Dugan Vintage Variant pattern.



Dugan Vintage Variant comparison to 6 cluster Fenton Vintage

The third Fenton variation is much smaller, averaging around 5 inches in diameter. It has four grape clusters, a paneled back, a large leaf on the interior base, and a starred marie. There are no similar patterns made by other manufacturers.



Fenton 4 cluster Vintage pattern

Dugan Vintage Variant: The best source description for this pattern is found in Carl Burns's book on Dugan Diamond Carnival Glass. However, even here there is confusion to be found. Dugan's Vintage Variant is very different from Fenton's six grape cluster pattern in that it was only produced with a dome foot. No other distinction is required to identify the Dugan pattern. It has six grape clusters, a definite break in the vine pattern, the pattern is sort of scrunched down into the piece slightly, it has a leaf on the interior base, it has a smooth back, and it has a dome foot.



Dugan Vintage Variant



Fenton marie base compared to Dugan dome footed base

In Carl's book he compares the pattern to Fenton's five grape cluster pattern. Since there is no mention of Fenton's six grape cluster patterns I assume Carl may have thought that all six grape cluster pieces were Dugan produced. Of course I could be in error, so if anyone has a Dugan Vintage Variant piece with a collar base and a plain back ... I would like to hear from you.

Editor's Note: This article was first published in the January 2010 issue of the Texas Carnival Glass Club's newsletter the RANGER without images. This revised version includes images.