

HOW TO:

WORKING WITH LUSTRES



Get
Fired
Up!

We test all our products before putting them on the website and we would like to share with you what we have learnt.

We have successfully fired on both our Vitraglaze earthenware and Vitraglaze stoneware glazes. As we did many colours on differing clay bodies and glazes, I used a consistent top temperature to work with all. Our simple one segment and a hold worked well. 0 – 790 degrees at 150 degrees an hour with a 4-minute hold.

Below are some top tips for working with Lustres...

- The amount of lustre to thinner is important, in general the non-metallic colours need more thinner than the 10% recommended by the supplier. With some needing almost 50% thinner.
- A band of colour will work best if done in one stroke, sometimes the colour is so thin you think it will not work but it will. On my teapot finials I had the issue of the side and top running into each other no matter which way up you did it. If faced with this problem, do one elevation, allow to dry then do the other.
- Stoneware glazes work better than earthenware, oddly you would think it would be the other way around, but I even had success on satin and matt surfaces on stoneware glazes.
- With the non-metallic colours the top temperature made little difference. If anything, they all preferred being fired a little higher, so eventually I stuck at 790 degrees with a relatively fast climb.
- If using earthenware glazes, then stick to the simple greys and brown as the underlying glazes. I experience problems with the red, oranges and yellow stained earthenware glazes. I know from experience that these stain colours are more refractory and therefore it made sense that it created a surface that was not as sympathetic with the lustre. Using underglazes and then a transparent fared better but not by much. Ideally plan your wares to have a transparent underlying area underneath the lustre.
- Use a lustre on the smallest area possible, a larger surface has more chance of going wrong.
- I had some success in double firing an unsuccessful piece, so if all goes wrong do not despair a touch up and go again as it may work.

- Buy the thinners, you are going to need it for all lustres, even if you just clean your brushes with it.
- Buy a quality brush, if hairs fall out during a stroke of the brush, it will spoil the end result.
- Heating a ware will make little difference.
- Test, test, test... never wing it, and hope for the best. Make quick simple prototypes of your final piece and test the application/underlying glaze/thinner to lustre ratio.

And finally, share with us your experience in using lustres, tell us your firing schedule, the underlying glaze and send us a picture as we love to see what people make with our products.