

GOLD COAST CHINA

TIPS WHEN USING LUSTRES

1. Work area should be as dust free as possible and well ventilated. Dust will ruin your work. Lustres are toxic and care should be used. Always wash hands before preparing food etc. If working for long periods with lustres, gloves and a mask are recommended.
2. Before working on your piece make sure it is cleaned well (I use Acetone). Residue of any kind e.g. greasy marks, dust, paint and moisture etc. will ruin your piece. Acetone evaporates immediately whereas methylated spirits can take a while to evaporate as it contains water.. If your piece is not dry before applying lustre small white spots can appear and your work will be ruined.
3. Before working with lustre set up area with all tools and lustres required. A dirty and messy work area will almost certainly result in a mishap.
4. **APPLYING LUSTRE:** I apply lustre direct from the bottle usually with a sponge or a brush. One brush can be used for all lustres **BUT BE CAREFUL**. If your brush is not cleaned well (clean Gum Turps or lustre thinners) after each application your next application of lustre may be contaminated. Don't mix up the lids as once again contamination can occur.

It is best to have a brush for each "family" of colours. My suggestion is a luster brush for: Oranges/Yellows, Blues, Greens, Pinks, Browns, and a separate brush for Mother of pearl. Remember if you go from , for example a dark blue to a light blue, your brush must be cleaned well or the dark blue will impact on the light blue.
5. Lustre dries quickly therefore it is essential that you work quickly.
6. Before firing, lustres are either green or brown in their liquid form. It is not until they are fired and the resins burn off that their true colour emerges.
7. Fresh lustre is very runny and not "jelly". Heat, age and evaporation will cause the gold based lustres (pinks, reds, Dk Blue , Tourmalin and some blues) to thicken and eventually turn to jelly. If lustre has thickened in the bottle try using lustre thinners a drop at a time. If the lustre has not thickened too much (i.e. to jelly) it usually can be saved. I keep my lustres in the fridge in summer – especially the pinks – as they have the most tendency to thicken.
8. Once lustre is applied and starts to dry (and this can happen rather quickly in summer) **DO NOT** go over the lustre again. The sponge will stick to the tacky lustre underneath and create ugly marks as well as leave bits of sponge. If this happens it is best to take off the lustre and start again
9. If lustre has dried and you want to take it off (before it has been fired) Gum Turps, Citrus Solvent or Odourless Solvent will literally melt the lustre off. After lustre has been taken off remember to use Acetone to clean the piece before applying more lustre as these solvents will leave a greasy film.
10. If lustre is applied too thickly it can flake off or blister when fired. The best approach is apply 2-3 thin coats rather than one heavy coat.
11. Also, if lustre is applied thickly it will stay wet longer and dust will certainly settle on the lustre and ruin your work.
12. **USING MASKING LACQUERS -** To mask out around designs I use red water based, green spirit based or black lustre resist. Always remove red and green resist before firing.
 - **RED** resist is the best to use with lustres. Clean brushes in water.
 - **GREEN** Resist is generally used when dipping as it is spirit based and won't "melt" in the water as the red will do. Green does **NOT** have a long shelf life and thickens very quickly. back to it's original consistency. Clean brushes in acetone.
 - **BLACK** resist fires with the lustre and is taken off after firing with Methylated Spirits or Jiff cream cleanser. Black resist is mainly used for designs with multiple firings. It should not be fired

over 720 as it can be hard to remove. Be careful when using black resist over lustres as it can change the colour of the lustre. It is best used over glaze only.

- I have at times used electrical tape to mask areas.

13 **FIRING LUSTRES** – Lustres on commercial white porcelain or china can be fired from 720 to 800. Bone China and some Stoneware glazes require a lower temperature – around 720. If fired higher they can crystallise. This can look very effective if it is consistent on your piece. BUT the problem is that firing on the soft glazes can have a tendency to be patchy and it is not a good look.

A few colours are sensitive. Some brands of Yellow should be kept to the lower temperatures OR applied on the final fire as they have a tendency to fire out.

The new greens in the Fay Good range should be fired 720-750.

As a general rule I fire most lustres and paints - 780 to 800. I fire both paints and lustres together. I like firing my lustres slightly higher as I find the Irrescent ones can become more iridescent. It is best to testfire and have a tile or plate with tests of colours fired on.

DO NOT overfire lustres as they become dull and lifeless.

14 No lustre will ever fire the same as there so many elements which can affect your work. The type of glaze on the china, the type of day when working, the temperature you are firing at, the place in the kiln etc. Don't forget our kilns are hotter at the top and cooler at the bottom.

15 **COLOURS** – There are many wonderful colours and with these colours you can create many colour variations. For example Lt Blue over Pink gives a beautiful Blue/Violet, Golden Amber over Iris Yellow gives a lovely golden brown.

EXPERIMENT and TEST FIRE

16 Lustres are transparent or opaque. The opaque colours are generally the darker colours: Copper, Dark blue, RubyRed, Carmine, Black, Gold, Platinum,

17 Lustres fall into 4 colour groups: Pinks/Reds, Blues, Greens, Yellow/Browns. Be careful mixing colours from the different groups as some colours are not compatible and could fire brown or grey. Same as with our paints. If in doubt testfire.

18 Mother of Pearl or Blue Green Iris over most colours gives lovely iridescent lights. It can sometimes be used to tone down a colour which has been applied too heavily i.e. too dark or to cover "mistakes".

19 The Opaque colours are not iridescent e.g. Carmine, Ruby Red, Dk Blue, Blue, Grey, Apricot, Orange, Pink, Black etc.

On the final firing a coat of Mother of Pearl over one of these lustres will give a lovely iridescence. Be careful as the MOP could change the colour. For example Ruby Red will fire more pink.

20 Lustres are expensive for the beginner and some colours I recommend for the beginner are: Mother of Pearl, Iris Yellow, Golden Amber, Iris Lilac, Light Blue, Yellow Green. These colours are not as expensive as some and are also easy to use. Some of the other darker colours require a little practice to manage.