



The BlueBird - Paragon's New Bead Annealer *Perfect for the Glass Bead Artist*

BY JUDITH FINN CONWAY

Paragon's newest kiln for the lampworking community is the compact BlueBird kiln, designed specifically for annealing lampworked glass beads. The BlueBird is made of a rugged steel case with high-tech ceramic fiber insulation in the roof, walls and floor. The element coils are seated in pinless grooves in the roof. It operates on standard household current and draws only 960 watts, less than many hair dryers. The annealing chamber is 20" long x 5" deep and 5" high, and the exterior dimensions measure 33 1/2" wide by 11 1/2" deep and 13" wide, so it doesn't take up much room in your studio while still offering a generous amount of annealing space.

SPEAKING OF SPACE

One of the nicest features of the BlueBird is the pair of doors which give the glass bead artist a full 20 inches of access to the annealing space. Each door measures 2 3/4 tall and 10" wide, and the pair of them provide easy access to an annealing area that is large enough to easily hold a full days' worth of beads for a single artist.

With this much annealing space, the BlueBird is also an ideal annealing chamber for teachers who need a reliable kiln for annealing the beads their students make in class.

DIGITAL CONTROLLER

The BlueBird kiln has an easy-to-use 3-key Sentry digital controller that can handle four programs with up to 8 segments each. It can be programmed to heat at any rate

appropriate for your work schedule, and to maintain the proper annealing temperature for the glass you are using for as long as needed.

At Vitrum Studio, since we use Bullseye glass for our beads, we generally set the controller to hold at 980°F - 1000°F while we are teaching or creating our own beads. (The higher temperature allows the interior to maintain a temperature that hovers around 960°F while we are repeatedly opening the doors to insert beads.) We set a second program for the appropriate annealing schedule depending upon the type and size of the beads being made. When we are finished with the torchwork session, we simply stop the kiln and set it for the second firing program to anneal our beads. The BlueBird takes care of the rest.

If you are in the market for an annealing kiln for your beads, take a good look at the BlueBird. It is a little workhorse that is backed by Paragon's commitment to innovative kiln design and excellent customer service. 🏠

HOT TIP

A NEW VERSION OF THE BLUEBIRD KILN WILL BE RELEASED BY PARAGON LATER THIS SUMMER. THE CONTROLLER ON THIS NEW VERSION WILL HAVE 9 POSSIBLE FIRING PROGRAMS, WITH 8 SEGMENTS EACH. IMPRESSIVE!