



# WILKINSON Plc

## Newsletter – April 2013

Venetian glass is a method of glass production developed over many centuries in Venice, Italy, on the island of Murano. The word Venetian also lends itself to a style of chandelier.

The origins of Venetian glassmaking go back to the times of the Roman Empire. A glass furnaces discovered by archaeologists in 1960 was dated as early as 8<sup>th</sup> Century. In early C13th glassmakers from across Europe started to migrate to Venice, in particular settling on the island of Murano. This voluntary migration became compulsory in 1291, all glassmakers had to move their businesses to the island and were forbidden by law to leave. Historians have argued the reasoning for this is that the danger from the fires of the glass makers wood burning furnaces presented too much of a risk to Venice's magnificent buildings. More likely the council wanted to monopolise and safeguard the lucrative techniques used by imprisoning the glass workers on the island.

The magnificent colouring of Murano glass is achieved by adding gold or silver foil to the glass mixture alternatively adding minerals such as zinc for white, cobalt for blue.

Today, some of the most important brands of glass in the world are still produced on Murano. Most notably Barovier & Toso, Venini, Pauly and Seguso. With Barovier & Toso officially recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records as one of the 100 oldest companies in the world, formed in 1295.

**Interesting Fact -** It can take an apprentice 15 to 20 years of working with a Master to become a Maestro of Murano glass.



All Venetians pictured are available to purchase. Although, we do not have Venetians for sale very often, instead we specialise in their restoration. Broken or missing parts can be matched from our large stock of pieces or ordered specially from the glass houses of Murano.

### Restoration Work

This hexagonal lantern needed complete restoration, its original gilt had worn and the wiring was clearly visible, as it would have been added after the lanterns completion, possibly with the advent of electricity.

Conservation of original features is important, so the frame was bronzed, as to gild it we would have to destroy the original putty to remove the glass panes – which would also put them at risk of breaking. However the removable brass components were gilded and the lantern rewired so the lamps would sit at the bottom to replicate where candles would have originally sat and added drip pans for authenticity. The wires were also hidden within a hollow tube so that the overall image of the lantern is aesthetically pleasing.



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