
Tornado vases

by Bob Grissom

Pattern Series

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The “Tornado” name was given to this vase by Marion Hartung. She lived in Kansas where tornadoes are a common occurrence. One could understand that it did not take much imagination for her to name this vase. It has also been called the “Tadpole” vase. The Glen & Stephen Thistlewood book, *A Century of Carnival Glass* attributes this vase to possibly have been made by Webb of Stourbridge, England prior to it being made by Northwood. Their name for it was a “Peacock Decoration.” For a detailed description of these early vases see the Thistlewood’s book, page 53 and 54.

The Northwood vases are found in two sizes. They all have the three ruffled top, except the one Wisteria whimsey. All of the larger vases have a smooth surface. The smaller vases are found with both the smooth surface or with ribs that run diagonally. The “tornado” motif is repeated three times, each within a panel, that is defined by three vertical zippered bars. The vases contain the usual Northwood (N) mark.

WHIMSEY – WISTERIA –

This dramatic vase is unusual not only for its unique conical shape and single base rim, but also its rarely seen wisteria color. It is made from the large size vase. The top two inches or so have a heavy stretch iridescence.





LARGE VASE – The large vase has a 3-inch base and is about 6 5/8 inches tall. Why there is so little difference between the two sizes is another Tornado mystery. The large size is more difficult to find than the small size, is known only with a smooth surface, and is only in amethyst/purple, green, lavender(R), and marigold(S). Zippered bars on the large size extend only as far down as the tails of the tornadoes.



SMALL VASE – SMOOTH SURFACE – The small vase has a 2 5/8-inch base and is about 6 inches tall. The zippered bar extends all the way to the collar base. It is found in usual colors of amethyst/purple, green, and marigold, plus a very few in white.



SMALL VASE – RIBBED SURFACE – The small size can also be found in a scarce ribbed version. Most are amethyst, a few marigold, cobalt is scarce, and a few are known in ice blue. The first known example in ice green turned up in England recently. The zippered bar extends all the way to the collar base.



WHIMSEY – SAPPHIRE – This spectacular vase is a whimsy in every sense of the word, and the only known example in sapphire. It was made from the small mold and pinched in at the top, then flared and ruffled. The top also has a stretch iridescence.



COLLAR BASE – The normal vases have what appears to be two base rims. The example shown with only one base rim belongs to Carl & Eunice Booker. Carl has seen more than one of these. It is speculated that these had the bottom part of the base ground off, possibly when they were made at the factory. Or, after making some of these vases the second collar base was added for the ease of handling when the glass was hot.



DEEP RUFFLED – This vase sold at the Seeck auction on October 13, 2001. The three ruffles are pulled down much more than the normal vases. This vase is amethyst and sold for \$2,100.00. Swede Tilberg has one with the same top but in blue. Both are ribbed.



PEDESTAL VASE – This carnival vase may have been Norhtwood's first attempt at a Tornado, although it is not marked. It is usually referred to as the Tornado variant. It has a smooth surface and is molded, with three distinct mold seams all the way through the pedestal base. There are very few examples known, all marigold.



PEDESTAL VASE – (Non U.S.) – Marigold and marigold with green tornadoes are known. The tail of the Tornado on these vases goes straight down and they do not have the three vertical zippered bars. The vases have a smooth surface and were blown. For a detailed description refer to Glen & Stephen Thistlewood's book, *A Century of Carnival Glass*.



WHIMSEY – MARIGOLD – This vase is made from the large mold and pinched in at the top, then flared and ruffled, and has a single base rim. It is the only one known in marigold.



WHIMSEY – MARIGOLD with GREEN TORNADO – What characterizes this large marigold Tornado as a whimsey is the green tornadoes. Interestingly, green tornadoes are also found on some of the non-U.S. pedestal Tornado vases. This vase is made from the large mold.



SPIRAL RIBBED VASE – Northwood made this swung vase. It is very scarce and has the same ribs as the ribbed Tornado. The vertical rib dividing the three sections of the vase is different than the zippered bar on the Tornado vase. The vase contains the Northwood (N) trademark.

Glass courtesy of Carl and Eunice Booker, Burns Auctions, Bart Dooley, George and Mavis Loescher, George Thomas/Dale Matheny, Seeck Auctions, Dennis Sutton and Gus VanDePerre. Thanks to Dennis Sutton for sharing his knowledge.