



▶ GLASS HOUSES Toledo Museum of Art's Glass Pavilion (left); a TMA glassblowing demo.

ESCAPE

# crystal clear

A sparkling world of glass history is easy to see.

» THANKS TO NATURAL gas and railroads, the Buckeye state was a hotbed for glass production and at one point in time boasted dozens of glass companies, producing everything from utilitarian wares to elegant art pieces. While those days have passed, our rich history in glass production is still alive, thanks to enthusiasts, collectors, and the volunteers who staff several museums devoted to the stuff. Whether you're a collector of Heisey or simply curious about the "Glass City," vestiges of Ohio's glassmaking past are within an easy day's drive and full of fascinating surprises.

## Ohio Glass Museum

If you're looking for what director Bill Eckman calls "a reflection of the terrific history of glassmaking in Ohio," then your first visit should be to the Ohio Glass Museum in Lancaster. Created five years ago when the city was looking to add more attractions to its downtown, the museum boasts a broad spectrum of wares from dozens of companies that once existed in our own backyard. Visitors get a personal tour through the pine display cases, watch a movie on glassmaking in the state-of-the-art auditorium, and even see the production of some sparkly gems as glassblowers Theresa Cress and Mike Stepanski get to work in the studio. If you desire a hands-on experience, you can make your own ornaments, paperweights, beads, and more by attending a glassblowing or flameworking class. For the truly ambitious, four-week courses are also available. Head up to Lancaster before mid-September to visit the current exhibit, *We're Cracked, We're Goofy, and We've Lost Our Marbles*, which showcases crackled and goofus glass (cold-painted pressed glass), along with marbles the size of small basketballs.

## National Heisey Glass Museum

The trademark diamond Hs on the old Heisey factory smokestacks are gone and the company once known as the "finest in glassware" closed its doors back in 1957, but you can

still discover the famous Heisey pressed glass at the National Heisey Glass Museum in Newark, Ohio. The museum opened in 1973 and is located in a beautiful historic white house (donated to the Heisey Collectors of America with the help of art collector Robbins Hunter) in downtown Newark. With more than 4,500 pieces to peruse, visitors will find fancy pressed

stemware, seasonal table settings, and animal figurines among the treasures on display. A 25-minute film enlightens museum-goers on the history of A.H. Heisey and Company, the glassmaking process, the HCA, and the museum. Stop by in October when the museum hosts its fall auction on the 40th anniversary of the HCA's inception.

## National Museum of Cambridge Glass

It only took a few hours for five and a half feet of water to rise in the National Museum of Cambridge Glass during the June 1998 flood. But thanks to a team of volunteers, most

of the extensive collection was saved. Now located on higher ground in downtown Cambridge, the museum is home to more than 8,000 pieces of colorful and innovative glassware that The Cambridge Glass Company produced from 1902 to 1958. The company specialized in tableware and home decor, and visitors will find Rose

## FYI

» Ohio Glass Museum, 124 W. Main St., Lancaster, (740) 687-0101, [ohioglassmuseum.org](http://ohioglassmuseum.org)

» National Heisey Glass Museum, 169 W. Church St., Newark, (740) 345-2932, [heiseymuseum.org](http://heiseymuseum.org)

» National Museum of Cambridge Glass, 136 S. Ninth St., Cambridge, (740) 432-4245, [cambridgeglass.org](http://cambridgeglass.org)

» The Toledo Museum of Art, 2445 Monroe St., Toledo, (419) 255-8000, [toledomuseum.org](http://toledomuseum.org)

Point stemware and pieces from the pale, coral-colored Crown Tuscan line Cambridge was famous for. Before you stroll through the museum you'll watch a 10-minute educational video made by the company in the 1940s on the glassmaking process. Once you start your tour you'll find a replica of the Sample Room with the original door, an educational center with molds from the factory, and a research library where you can do your own rubbings on the original etching plates. Feel free to bring the kids along, as the museum won an Excellence in Tourism Award from the Eastern Ohio Development Alliance in 2008 for its educational programming, which includes children's tours and short plays.

The Toledo Museum of Art

There's a reason Toledo is called the "Glass City" and the Glass Pavilion at The Toledo Museum of Art proves it. Attracting almost 100,000 visitors last year, the 74,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Pavilion opened five years ago and gives visitors a preview of what's inside: all of the exterior—and most of the interior—walls are large panels of curved glass. The Pavilion is home to more than 5,000 pieces of glassware from ancient times (the oldest piece dates back to 1500 B.C.) to present day, including a rare European collection of German Baroque and Venetian Renaissance. And of course the collection houses a large representation of Libbey glassware, the company that gave Toledo its nickname, including the iconic Libbey Punch Bowl that the company exhibited at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Edward Drummond Libbey—also the founder of TMA—was a big supporter of the glass studio movement in the 1960s, in which artists explored glassmaking in studios instead of factories. This concept is still alive so make sure you check out the free glassmaking demonstrations, which are available daily.

—LAURA ALLEN

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