

These ain't yo' mamma's glasses!...



BASKING IN THE GLOW

DAVE HOLMES VISITS WITH POST 4 OPTICS

LEFT: SHOOTER'S PURPLE PASSION STANDARD FRAME.
RIGHT: COPPER PRO PLUS FRAME.

Al Rinard had a way with words that left a lasting impression on his then five-year-old son Mike. "If you want to eat, there are machines that need cleaning." I don't remember anything quite so profound from my dad, but 56 years later, Mike Rinard still laughs when he tells the story.

Al Rinard was an Idaho logger back in 1930, with a young family, when an accident left him with shattered ankles. He laid in a hospital bed for months as talk of amputation held his attention. A doctor in Spokane heard of his plight and thought he could help. He proposed putting rods in the ankles – something we would think little of today, but what was, at that time, ground breaking surgery. The surgery was successful, but there was no hope of returning to logging. After ten months in hospital, Al was faced with going on a disability or presented with the opportunity to go to work grinding lenses for glasses. He chose the latter. He worked for American Optical until a fire wiped out the business. American had a branch office in Lewiston (Idaho) that they decided to sell. Al was

offered a deal he didn't refuse – and became a small business owner and moved the family to Lewiston.

Following in his father's footsteps, Mike has spent most of his life in the optics business, literally growing up with it. He understands the how and why of every aspect of shaping lenses – and the 'ins and outs' of the supply side of the industry. That's why there aren't any pieces missing in the Post 4 puzzle. His hands-on experience is

a valuable resource for shooters, particularly for those whose vision doesn't fit the 'text book'. As Mike explains it, there is one goal, but there can be several ways to get there. Did you know Mike is also an AAA 27 AA shooter? He knows exactly what you're trying to accomplish.

FRAMES

Post 4 boasts the only titanium-framed interchangeable lens system for shooters. Mike welded plenty of steel frames in his time and thought there was something lacking. A friend suggested extruding titanium. As with most ideas, this one wasn't as simple as it seemed, but a year and a half later, titanium it was. While the difference in weight between steel frames and the lighter titanium frames is small, when coupled with the strength of titanium, there is an edge there that Mike views as worth having. The frames are made in Japan at the only place with the specialized equipment to do it. The alloyed extruded titanium is then anodized, a superior finish in Mike's estimation when compared to the plating or

coatings on steel frames. The spring hinges are made in Austria – because they are the best – with other parts made in the USA and the assembly done here as well.

Post 4 currently offers frames in the traditional large lens shooting glass style and a new smaller frame for those who prefer a bit less of the 'bug eye' look. The new frame, christened the Pro Plus, retains the brow bar that sweat balls like me, who are always getting lenses smeared by grease and perspiration, love to see.

LENSES

While the company is justifiably proud of its frame designs, it is the Post 4 lenses that Mike is most proud of. He feels that his expertise and control over the lens manufacturing process can deliver to shooters the best of the optic world. The Post 4 optics lab used to be a typical facility doing work for various folks, but a few years ago, Mike decided to concentrate on the shooting market and did away with wholesale production work. As a shooter, you get the benefit of up-to-date equipment coupled with



MIKE IS AN AAA 27 AA SHOOTER. REST ASSURED THE GUY DOING YOUR LENSES KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH AS A SHOOTER.

Mike's years of experience. That means he knows when to use the computer program and when it's time to step outside the programming to achieve the desired results. As he puts it, "The programmer does a great job – but he's not an optician."

Post 4 lenses are made of CR39, a thermosetting plastic polymer, which in plain English means they are molded plastic blanks. CR39 (Columbia Resins 39th try at finding the right formulation) blanks can be purchased from many suppliers, but Post 4s all come from Zeiss. "They are consistently the best on the market," says Mike. One would be hard pressed to argue the point with Zeiss' legendary reputation. Polarized blanks come from a single supplier for the same reason – consistent quality.

CR39's optical qualities are top notch – it's harder (more scratch resistant) in its native state than polycarbonate lenses with the best anti-scratch coatings. It's also light weight, an advantage given the size of shooting lenses. It isn't as impact resistant as polycarbonate or the newer Trivex lens material, but Mike feels it is strong enough to get the job done and prefers the superior optical performance of CR39.

Wrapped lenses, with a curve to closer match the face profile, are marketed quite heavily now so I asked Mike if it would be possible to have a bit more curve on the new Pro-Plus lenses. "We could, but we wouldn't get the same optical performance." The current lens profile permits a wide range of prescription accommodation as well, a range that can't be covered when there is a higher base curve on the lens.

'Optical performance' is a big part of Mike's vocabulary. As we talked extensively, I asked questions about materials, base curves on lenses, tints and anything else I could think of. Often the response

was "because of the optical performance." Fashion and marketing were never mentioned.

TINTS

For years the standard approach to tinted lenses has been pretty universal – acrylic dyes. The finished lenses are dipped in a heated container of dye for a specified period of time to achieve the desired color. That may be an over simplification, but it certainly is the general theme of the operation. Colors can be layered, dipping in one for a time, then adding a second color on top. The variety may not quite be endless, but it certainly is extensive. Tint names can be entertaining as companies search for something catchy – "ices" and "blazes" immediately come to mind. Post 4 offers over 60 tints, but eight of them make up the vast majority of sales. Any tint, almost any prescription – Post 4 can do that.

HIGH DEFINITION

No two words have sold more TVs in the last few years than "high definition". It is an easy concept to define on a TV screen. There are more lines of light, thus images appear sharper and richer. Manufacturers even offer HD on screens too small to capably display the difference – as any forthright salesman should tell you. Nonetheless, 1280 lines per inch gets you HD.

The optics world has no such standard. If you stay up late enough, you can get one pair of incredible HD sunglasses for \$19.95, but if you act fast enough, you can get two for the same price, plus shipping and handling! Without a standard, the HD label may not mean much – and there is no standard. We might be reasonably safe to say that the HD label in optics will likely produce an image with somewhat increased

contrast over the same lens material without the manufacturer's "HD" process. Keeping it simple, optical quality is determined by the inherent qualities of the lens material used. Enhanced color/contrast is an add-on.

GLOW LENSES

Post 4 worked with two engineers and a chemist for three and a half years to perfect the process used to produce their new Glow lenses – available in eight color tints. The website doesn't say much about them – look if you choose to, but you will only get a feel for the colors from the outside looking in and that, my friends, does not tell the story.

My introduction to the Glow lenses came from two friends who recently bought these high definition lenses. I ho-hummed them initially. I have only one good eye, am partially color blind and in the early stages of a cataract. I had become quite jaded in my attempts to find anything that would help me see orange targets in a light gray sky. The standard response from anyone in the industry was that I needed vermilion. I might as well pee on a forest fire as use vermilion. I could buy a gun with the money I've spent on lenses in pursuit of the elusive magic tint. When prescription

lenses, with their added expense, became necessary, I quit spending money searching for the grail, but anxiously tried every new thing that came along. Nothing. Clear lenses with the best anti-reflective coating I could get weren't perfect, but they worked fine in good light – better than any tints I had seen in a range of less-than-good-light.

With that for a background, let me share my experiences "basking in the Glow". The first time I looked through a set of Glows, it was cloudy. The tint was a Shooters Passion Purple. (Anyone have a problem figuring out the basic color?) Targets were highlighted a bit, but the lens was way darker than common sense would dictate for the day – besides, I've never cared for dark lenses in even bright light. Ho-hum.

My two friends, both inclined to frugality, swore up and down that these lenses were amazing in sun light. They had tired them out at a recent shoot, could see rings and edges on targets in a most amazing fashion, and returned to the Post 4 trailer and ponied up on the spot.

I tried my friend's Desert Glows, a light vermilion, holding the plain lenses over my prescriptions. Visibility was great, even against a tree line 70 yards in the distance. I called Mike Rinard and explained my situation. He brought up the





“vermillion” thing. I explained my prior experience over the years which had actually occurred mostly with Post 4’s standard tints. He mentioned his new Copper Glows. We kicked it around for a bit and I decided to try the new Pro Plus frames and the Copper Glow lenses. (Normally the copper lens would be a sun lens, but obviously I’m not normal. I have witnesses.)

The glasses arrived in impressive fashion. (Post 4 takes pride in prompt production and delivery.) My first shooting trip was on a partly sunny day with some funky

white/gray clouds at the tree line. Targets were slightly backlit. Target visibility was stunning. I didn’t even notice the target transition from background to sky.

Second shooting trip and gray clouds. I didn’t get the target enhancement of the first day, but had no trouble seeing the targets clearly. They appeared more yellow than orange, but the magic word is “appeared”. I could see them from the trap to the ground. Target visibility against a background was excellent. My friend was wearing Desert Glows. He could see see targets even more

clearly (in the same light) than he could through my Coppers, so don’t think Coppers are the perfect answer for everyone. You will find Mike Rinard is the most accommodating and helpful resource you could hope for when deliberating your needs.

The Glow lenses increase contrast and they do it at ridiculously low light levels. Edges on any shape are more distinct. Using photographic terms, the contrast seems higher and the depth of field greater.

I quizzed Mike about what was going on with the Glows. He understandably wasn’t going to go into great detail, but did say that there are light filters in the lens that block certain portions of the light spectrum. Glow lenses are a new generation utilizing science and engineering instead of just old-time optics. Black and orange light aren’t ‘messed’ with, but the other colors are.

While the initial goal was enhanced target visibility, the process also enhanced the clarity of the lenses – an unexpected fringe benefit. Mike commented they should even help those dealing with color impaired vision. I’ll add an “Amen” to that!

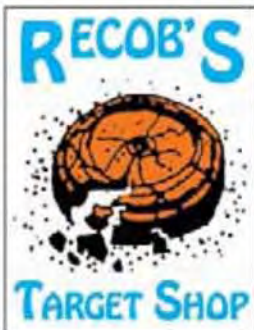
There is something really good going on here. Mike said the standard response to those trying the lenses for the first time is “Wow!”

If you are curious about the Glow advantage, but don’t want to abandon your favorite frames, or just don’t want the expense of new frames, not to worry. Post 4 makes lenses for any frame. In fact, about 30% of the lenses they currently produce are for other vendors frames. Prescription lenses are \$95 a pair, non-prescription \$40. Frames and lenses are \$195 and \$120 respectively. ■

www.post4optics.com

Go For The Gold

Serious target shooters everywhere know how important it is to shoot the best available ammunition. That’s why shooters choose Federal Gold Medal when the top prize is on the line.



975 19th St., Prairie du Sac, WI 53578
(Located in the Industrial Park)

608-643-6424
800-359-4571

www.recobstargetshop.com

Email: info@recobstargetshop.com

WE SHIP UPS ANYWHERE

Order by 10 a.m. CST, usually ships same day!

