

## Bead Encyclopedia 2: The “Beadiverse”

By Valorie Clifton

My first installment discussed seed beads in all their glory—the types, manufacturers, sizes and finishes. So much can be created using only seed beads! However, to really add the glamour and sparkle and to further stretch the design possibilities, you need to utilize other types of beads. The combination of seed beads paired with other bead types explodes into the most wonderful, imaginative creations! The design possibilities are infinite, as shown by the plethora of beaded creations in the world, each one a unique expression of the joy and passion that comprise the art of bead weaving.



This class provides an overview of the more common types and shapes of beads. Not every bead is represented because new beads are introduced every day. The world of beads is expanding as new ideas are presented. Welcome to my corner of the beadiverse! These beads that I’m presenting are all part of my jealously (and zealously) guarded hoard.

Let’s begin with the most commonly used and most popular beads. Then we will move to the less common shapes. Finally, I will showcase a few of the newer beads that are cropping up and gaining popularity. Enjoy!



### Druk

Let’s begin with one of my absolute favorite beads: Druks! They are super versatile and can be used with nearly any stitch.

*The term “druk” is widely recognized to indicate round, pressed glass, Czech beads.*

Druks are manufactured in the Czech Republic. They are, quite simply, glass beads that are pressed in a mold. They are uniform in size and shape due to the molding process and are available in a huge array of colors and sizes. I personally own druks that range from 2mm to 10mm in size, but they are also available in larger sizes.

Druks are available in a huge array of finishes, such as Opaque, Transparent, Picasso, AB, Iris, Mottled, Tortoise Shell, Metallic and Pearl. Czech glass pearls are druks that are coated with pearlized paint.

Druks are suitable for almost any beadwoven stitch, bead embroidery, stringing or fringe work.

Not all round beads are druks. Others made of crystal, gemstone, wood and plastic are simply called “rounds” or “round beads”.

### Bicone

Bicone beads are most often referred to as “bicones”. Bicones remain one of the most popular shapes amongst bead weavers. They resemble a pair of faceted pyramids or cones that are joined at their bases. Bicones come in a wide variety of sizes, finishes and colors.

The most popular bicones are made of crystal. Crystal bicones are sharply faceted in the most advantageous way in order to produce shimmer and sparkle. The ones shown are Swarovski crystal bicones in 4mm and 6mm sizes.

Bicones also come in glass and gemstone forms. Glass bicones tend to be more rounded- they usually lack the sharp faceting that you see with crystal. They can also be molded. Pressed glass bicones will sometimes have a seam. Lower quality ones will have sharp, ragged seams.

Bicones are suitable for almost any beadwoven stitch, bead embroidery, stringing or fringe work.



### Faceted Round

Faceted round beads give beadwork an elegant, shimmery look. Faceted beads can be crystal or glass— both are beautiful and sparkly.

Faceted rounds are available with various coatings and finishes, most popularly Aurora Borealis. They can also be coated with metallic coatings, Picasso finishes and many others.

Beads with a great number of facets are sometimes known as “disco beads” (the smoky colored, larger beads are an example of disco beads).

Faceted rounds are suitable for almost any beadwoven stitch, bead embroidery, stringing or fringe work.

### Fire Polished

Fire Polished beads are most often from the Czech Republic, though other countries also manufacture them. They are an affordable alternative to the pricier crystal beads. They are faceted glass that has been passed through a flame to “polish” them and give them added sparkle. They are slightly oval in shape; they are not truly round.

Fire polished beads come in a variety of sizes and finishes. Finishes are usually applied after the beads are polished. I personally own a great quantity of 3mm, 4mm and 6mm fire polished beads but they are available in larger sizes.

Fire polished beads are suitable for almost any beadwoven stitch, bead embroidery, stringing or fringe work.





## Roundel, Rondelle, Rondel

Roundels are also widely referred to as rondelles and rondels. No matter the spelling, these beads are fantastic!

“Roundel” refers to the shape of these beads: They are round, usually faceted, and slightly flattened or “squat”. They’re typically wider in circumference than the thickness from flat side to flat side.

Roundels are available in crystal, glass, gemstone and wood. Gemstone roundels are usually not faceted. They can have all the same finishes of other beads, most commonly Vitrail and AB coatings.

Roundels are usually denoted by the circumference size. For instance, if a pattern calls for 6mm roundels, the

6mm will be the larger measurement (for instance, 4mm x 6mm). Some of the most common sizes are 2x3mm, 4x6mm, 6x8 and 7x9mm, though larger sizes are readily available.

## Rivoli

Ah, Rivolis! Rivoli beads are manufactured by Swarovski. They are beautiful, sparkly and shimmery and they add glamour to any beaded project.

Rivolis mimic the look of faceted gemstones except that they are pointed in front and back and faceted. The facets allow more light to reflect. The larger the Rivoli, the more shimmer it produces. Most Rivolis are foil-backed to add more shine; however, not all are foil-backed. Jet Rivolis, for example, look the same on either the front or back side. This makes them perfect for open bezels for earrings and pendants.

Some Rivolis have “after market” finishes applied to them to give even more sparkle (for example, Peacock finishes). My favorite finish is Lt. Vitrail. Light Vitrail produces soft purples and greens similar to Mystic Topaz. Medium Vitrail produces deeper greens and purples.

Roundels are suitable for several beadwoven stitches, but they are most often used for bead embroidery, stringing or fringe work.

Rivolis are perfect for bead embroidery. They can also be bezeled and used as necklace and bracelet components, pendants and ring focals.



## Chaton

I have recently discovered Chatons. Chatons are cut to mimic actual gemstones. They are foil-backed like Rivolis and faceted to give lots of sparkle and shine.





Chatons are apparently manufactured worldwide in countries ranging from China to the Czech Republic to India. They are also manufactured by Swarovski. Swarovski makes both flat backed and pointed back versions.

From what I could discover with a quick web search, Swarovski manufactures Chatons up to 12mm in diameter.

These can be used in much the same way as Rivolis; however, their tiny size limits their uses. Chatons are good for bead embroidery projects.

### Chaton vs. Rivoli

To further highlight the differences between Chatons and Rivolis, I drew this diagram and took a photo of the beads side-by-side. The larger beads in the photo are Rivolis. The smaller pair are Chatons.

- Chatons have flat faces. Rivolis have pointed faces.
- While both are pointed in the back, Chatons have deeper, sharper points in back to compensate for the flat face (in order to achieve the same sparkle as pointed faces).
- Rivolis are shallower so they sit better on fabric for bead embroidery.
- As previously discussed, Chatons are much smaller than Rivolis.

The reduced size range of Chatons limits their use but the beauty and authentic gemstone cut make up for the limitations.



Chaton



Rivoli



### Montee

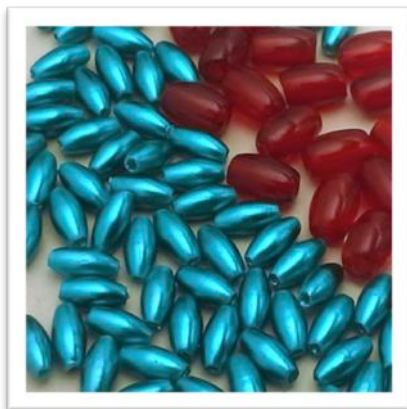
Swarovski manufactures interesting rhinestones called Montees. They are similar to chatons but they have flat backs and are pre-mounted in silver-plated settings.

What makes these montees unique is that they have an "X" shaped channel in the back of the setting. This channel allows for thread to criss-cross through these beads, making them ideal for embellishing beadwork. They seem to only come in sizes 3mm, 4mm and 6mm diameter.

These are best suited as embellishments applied using double-needle, Right Angle Weave stitch, or as it's more commonly called, Cross-Weave stitch.

## Oval

Oval beads can be glass, crystal, wood or gemstone. They can be smooth or faceted. Due to their shape, they are limited to only a few bead weaving stitches but they work wonderfully in fringe work. Oval beads can also be used in bead embroidery and strung projects.



## Rice

Rice beads are, as the name implies, rice-shaped. They are long, thin, tapered ovals. Rice beads are most often pearls and about the size of a grain of rice.

Rice beads are useful in a variety of beadweaving stitches, particularly ladder stitch and Right Angle Weave. They are great for bead embroidery and work really well in fringes and strung projects.

## Top-Drilled and Center-Drilled beads

I wanted to take a moment to illustrate the differences between top-drilled beads and center-drilled beads, also known as “through-drilled” beads.

Top-drilled beads are drilled through the top portion. They are often in teardrop shapes but any bead can be top-drilled, including rectangles, barrels, rounds, sticks and pearls.

Center-drilled or through-drilled beads have their hole drilled right through the center of the bead. This is the most common way that beads are drilled. Both types have their uses.



Top-Drilled



Center-Drilled  
Through-Drilled



## Top-Drilled Teardrop

Here are some examples of top-drilled teardrops. They can be faceted or smooth, glass or crystal or gemstone.

Faceted teardrops that are top-drilled are usually called “briolettes” and “pears”. Really round, short and plump teardrops are called “onions”. Wide, flat teardrops with fat bottoms are called “hearts”.

These are used as focals for earrings and pendants. They’re available in a variety of sizes and finishes.

Top-drilled teardrops are popular as embellishments for fringe work. They have more “swing” than their center-drilled counterparts.

## Center-Drilled Teardrop

Center-drilled teardrops, like their counterparts, are available in a variety of sizes, materials and finishes. These shown are glass, crystal and gemstone.

The hole goes through the middle of these, which makes them easier to use in most applications. These are my favorite embellishments for fringe work and earrings. They are more securely mounted to beadwork so there is less movement, but they hang nicely.



## Coin and Lentil

Coin beads and lentil beads are generally the same thing. The terms are interchanged quite a bit, but typically coin beads will be flatter on the top and bottom with blunter edges. They are “through drilled” (with the hole sandwiched through the middle of the bead). Lentil beads, on the other hand, are more often rounded or “puffy” on the top and bottom, with slightly tapering edges.

They’re available in all the same finishes as other beads and are most often made of pressed glass. They can be faceted, but most often they are smooth.

Coin and lentil beads are suitable for bead embroidery, stringing and fringe work.

## Cloisonné Bead

Cloisonné beads are actually metal beads that have been enameled. They most often contain filigree that has been filled with glass enamel. These little gems are more expensive than normal beads due to the lengthy manufacturing process.

Cloisonné beads can come in a variety of shapes but they are most often in round, pillow, barrel or coin shapes. They are available in a multitude of sizes.

Cloisonné beads are suitable for several beadwoven stitches, bead embroidery, stringing and fringe work. Their uses are determined by their shape. For example, rounds are more versatile than coin shaped beads.



## Pillow and Lozenge

Pillow and lozenge beads can be glass, crystal, wood or gemstone. They can be smooth or faceted. They are generally puffy yet flat, center-drilled beads in rectangle, square and oval shapes.

Due to their shape, they are limited to fringe work, bead embroidery and stringing projects. However, they can be bezeled with beads and treated as cabochons.



## Nugget

Nugget beads can be very rough or smooth. They are most often organic and abstract in shape. Some bead vendors consider any “chip” that is extra large to be a nugget bead. They are most often gemstone.

Nuggets can be used in stringing projects and bead embroidery. Depending on whether they are top-drilled or center-drilled, they can be used as embellishments or fringe.



## Lampwork

Lampwork beads are available in a wide array of colors, sizes and shapes. They are usually hand-created on a mandrel using melted glass rods. Depending on the skill of the craftsman, they can be ornate (like the intricate rose beads on the left side of the photo) or very simple. Lampwork beads can be very expensive but they are time-consuming to make.

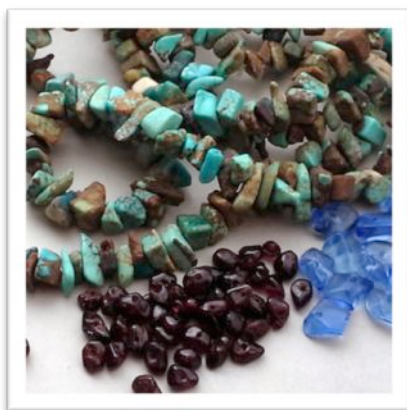
## Cabochon

Cabochons are made to be beveled or set in jewelry pieces. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Most often cabochons are gemstone but glass ones are readily available.

Cabochons have flat backs and domed fronts. The domes can be extremely high or very low. Cabochons are not drilled.

These are most often used to make chunky earrings or bracelets but they are also used as focal beads for necklaces and rings.

Lampwork beads are most often large in size, with large center holes.



## Chip

Chip beads are among my favorites. I have quite a hoard of gemstone chips. They are most often in gemstone form but I also have quite a large selection of glass chips.

Chips come in a range of sizes from small to large. They are organic in nature and irregular in size. My favorites are smoothly tumbled, like the garnet chips in the bottom of the photo.

Chips are wonderful because they are very inexpensive. They're great for stringing projects, bead embroidery and strung projects and they are a natural for embellishments.

## Pressed Glass

Pressed glass beads come in so many shapes and sizes. They can be very high quality if they come from a good manufacturer or they can be poor in quality, with rough seams.

These are pressed in molds like Druk beads. Their uses are dependent upon their size and shape, but most can be strung or used as fringe beads.



## Donut

Donut beads, like their namesake, have a center hole. The hole is usually large. These can be glass or gemstone and are available in a wide range of sizes and materials.

Donut beads make wonderful focal pieces for jewelry. They can be wire wrapped or beaded. They can be simply strung on cording or embellished into fancy pieces.

## Twist

Twist beads are, as the name implies, twisted. In my personal collection, most of my twisted beads are from the 50s and 60s. This leads me to believe that they were once really popular.

Twist beads are great for earrings and strung pieces, but they also make nice fringe beads.



## Flower Cups, Bellflowers

Flower cups and bellflowers (the bell-shaped, glass ones with scant petals) can be glass, gemstone or acrylic. They come in a variety of sizes and can be shallow, much like spacers, or they can be very deep. They can usually be used on their own but they are most often paired with other beads.

I use these most often for earrings but they make excellent embellishments for bead embroidered pieces or beadwoven ropes.

## Pressed Glass Flower Spacer

These spacer beads are flat or only slightly cupped. They are Czech, pressed glass and come in a variety of sizes and colors.

These are most often used in strung projects but they also make nice embellishments for beadwoven pieces or bead embroidered pieces.







### Heishi, Spacer, Squashed

These spacer beads are also commonly referred to as “Heishi” and “Squashed” beads. They can be glass, crystal, wood or metal.

Heishi is traditionally a term reserved for natural shell beads but it is becoming a more common term to encompass any natural, disc-shaped bead.

These spacer beads resemble roundels except that the top and bottom sides are flush (blunt, totally flat). They can have large center holes or small ones. They are disc shaped with a center-drilled hole.

These are natural beads for strung projects and they are also quite good for fringe work.

### Daisy Spacer

These are common spacer beads. They are also referred to as Daisy Heishi by some vendors. These are usually metal or metal plated and are naturally used as spacers between other beads in strung projects and fringe work. They can also be used as embellishments.



### Corrugated, Fluted

Metal beads that have grooves cut into them are referred to as corrugated beads. If the grooves extend from one hole to the other (lengthwise), they are sometimes also referred to as Fluted.

These beads come in a large variety of sizes and shapes. They are most often used in strung or fringed projects.

### Stardust

Stardust beads are most often metal beads that have a slightly rough, glittery coating that resembles dust. The texture of these beads gives them added sparkle and glimmer and they really shine with movement.

These beads are most commonly round and thus can be used in almost any application. They work well in strung and fringed projects.





### Peanut, Farfalle, Berry

These interesting little beads are bulbous on both ends with a center hole. They stack into each other like little interlocking units.

Preciosa makes similar ones named Farfalle beads that are 2mm x 4mm in size.

Matsuno makes these, named Peanuts. Peanuts can be found in 2mm x 4mm and also 3mm x 6mm sizes.

Miyuki has something similar, though they are fatter. They are called Berry beads and are 2.5mm x 4.5mm in size.

These little gems are wonderful with Right Angle Weave and Peyote stitches. They can be strung, beadwoven and used as embellishments.

### Magatama, Short and Long

Magatama beads are Japanese drop-type beads. Short Magatamas are shaped like fat, flattened drops with an off-center hole. Long Magatamas are sort of fang-shaped with a skewed hole that goes through the bead at an angle.

Magatamas are made by several manufacturers:

Miyuki makes 3mm, 4mm and 5mm short Magatamas and 4mm x 7mm long Magatamas. As far as I can tell, the long Magatamas are only manufactured by Miyuki.

Toho makes Magatama drops in 3mm and 4mm size.

Matsuno has something similar called Drops, which are 3.4mm in size.

Magatamas make great embellishments for bead embroidery, bead crochet, Kumihimo, fringe work and strung projects. They can be used in spiral stitch and a few other beadwoven stitches.



### Rose Petal

Rose petal beads are fairly new. They come in two sizes and have one hole in the lower portion of each petal bead. They are triangular in shape but “pinched” and slightly cupped. These are Czech pressed glass beads.

Rose petal beads are available in two sizes: 8mm x 7mm and 14mm x 13mm.

These make nice flowers (obviously) but they can also be used to embellish beaded bezels, bead embroidery, fringe work and strung projects.

## Dagger

These dagger beads resemble long flower petals. They are top drilled and are most often used as embellishments or as fringe drops. These are Czech pressed glass beads. The most commonly available sizes for dagger beads are 3mm x 10mm and 5mm x 16mm.



Now we are delving into the newly popular, two-holed beads! The last few years have seen a meteoric rise in the popularity of 2-hole beads.



## Super Duo

Super Duos are my favorite two-hole beads! I use them in 80% of my designs. These beads are sturdy and they interlock when sewn together to create a smooth, slinky fabric of beads. They are available in a huge array of colors and finishes.

Super Duos are manufactured by Maturabeads and Koralex. They are Czech pressed glass beads, sized 2.5mm x 5mm. Because they are pressed glass, they are very uniform in size.

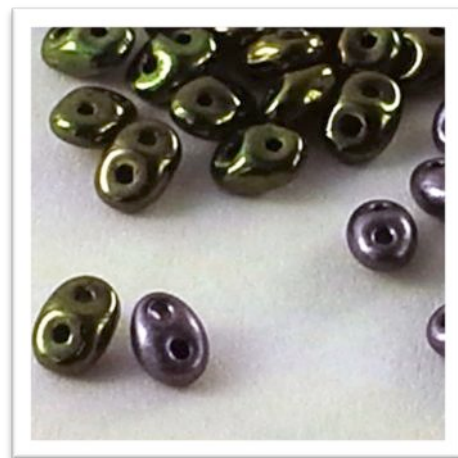
Super Duos lend themselves well to Peyote, Herringbone, Right Angle Weave, Netting and Spiral stitches. They make great beaded beads and beaded bezels for Rivolis.

## Super Duo Vs. Twin

Preciosa Ornela manufactures Twin beads. The green beads in the photo are Super Duos; the purple ones are Twins. Twins are similar to Super Duos but there are some marked differences:

- Twin beads are extruded, whereas Super Duos are molded. This makes Twins less uniform in size and shape. Twins have to be “culled” before they can be used.
- Super Duos are slightly larger than Twins. This means items made using Super Duos are also larger.
- In most instances, these beads are not interchangeable. I would not recommend using Twins where Super Duos are called for when beading from a pattern.

Twins are less expensive than Super Duos; a tube of Twins will have more beads per gram than the same weight tube of Super Duos.







### Tila

Tila beads are manufactured by Miyuki. They are little tile beads with two parallel holes drilled lengthwise through the center. These little beads can be quite expensive, but they come from a quality manufacturer and are very uniform in size. Tilas are 5mm x 5mm x 1.9mm in size.

They are available in a range of colors and finishes. They lend themselves well to several beadwoven stitches, as well as bead embroidery and some strung projects.

### Czech Tile

I personally love these tile beads. They are super smooth and provide a nice tactile feel. These are Czech manufactured and are quite a bit larger than their Japanese counterparts, Tila beads. Czechmates tile beads are 5mm x 5mm in size, which isn't much larger than Tilas. The difference comes in the thickness. Czech tiles are nearly twice as thick as Tila beads. In my opinion they are more durable.

The quality of the glass and the array of colors and finishes are very good. These pair excellently with Super Duo beads and other Czech 2-hole beads for a wide range of design options.

Tile beads can be woven using Peyote stitch and perhaps a few other stitches. They would also work well in bead embroidered projects.



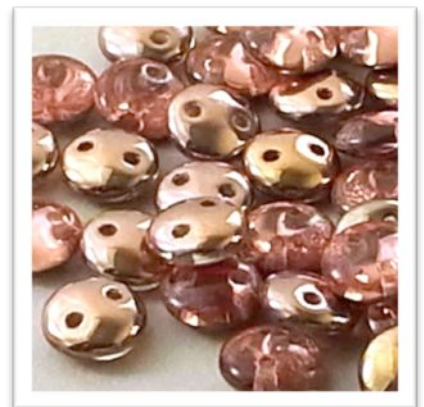
### Brick

Brick beads are manufactured by the same company that makes Czech tiles. These are much the same as the tiles as far as quality and heft go. They are substantial in thickness, come in a variety of colors and finishes, and can be used in much the same way as their companion, 2-hole beads. Czechmates brick beads are 3mm x 6mm in size.

### 2-Hole Lentil

I've recently discovered these 2-hole lentils at my local bead shop and so far I love the feel of them. They are very smooth, very uniform in shape and size, and come in a large assortment of colors and finishes. 2-hole lentils are little, puffy discs with the two holes drilled through the center, much like buttonholes.

Surprise! They're made by the same Czech manufacturer as the tile and brick beads. These are 3mm thick x 6mm diameter in size.



These lentils are slippery to work with due to their smooth, fat shape but they work beautifully with Super Duo and other beads. They would work well in bead embroidered and beadwoven projects.



### Piggy

I can only assume these beads get their names due to the 2 holes that make them look like little pig snouts. These beads are domed discs with two offset holes drilled through them. Piggies are 4mm x 8mm in size and come in a large variety of colors and finishes. They are Czech pressed glass.

These are quite new to the market and I have not yet designed a piece that uses them. They overlap, so they would be interesting in a bead embroidered project. They could be strung through just the center hole to make cute little bead caps.

### Review Questions

- 1) True/False. Donut beads make wonderful focal pieces.
  - a) True
  - b) False
  
- 2) Choose all of the following that are irregular shaped.
  - a) Chip
  - b) Coin and Lentil
  - c) Rice
  - d) Nugget
  
- 3) When choosing between a Chaton or Rivoli, which is better for sitting flat in bead embroidery?
  - a) Chaton
  - b) Rivoli
  
- 4) Which of the following is great for sewing on fabric, has a flat back, and is pre-mounted in a silver setting?
  - a) Rivoli
  - b) Montee
  - c) Lentil
  
- 5) True/False. Magatamas are only made by Miyuki.
  - a) True
  - b) False