

# Basic Detail Report

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## Chevron Bead

**Date**

2025

**Primary Maker**

Wendy Red Star

**Medium**

Glass

**Description**

From the Trade Bead Market Ledger: First cut from Venetian furnaces in the fourteenth century, the Chevron bead carried the logic of a currency long before the word commodity was coined. Its concentric layers of blue, red, and white glass were not only technical marvels—they were messages in color, signaling access, control, and distance. By the early 1600s, bundles of these small, hard stars began moving out from the port of Venice in ships bound for West Africa, the Caribbean, and eventually the interior trade corridors of North America. A single bead could pass through dozens of hands—European traders, African merchants, North American intermediaries—accumulating value through the very act of travel. Unlike gold, the Chevron's worth was not fixed in metal but in perception. Where it landed, it became an index of rarity, of relationship, of promise. Traders in the Missouri River basin weighed its layered brilliance against pelts, cloth, and copper kettles; in coastal Africa, its red and blue striations mirrored the ceremonial colors of kingship. Today, the Chevron's story reads like a micro-exchange in itself—a pre-industrial futures market where beauty, scarcity, and negotiation converged. To collectors and cultural historians, each surviving bead operates as both artifact and stock: a compressed history of glass, empire, and desire.

**Dimensions**

Overall: 4 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 in. (11.4 x 8.9 x 8.9 cm)