

Main

June 15, 2011

What is a Fountain Pen Converter?



(Aurora push-in style piston fountain pen converter)

Those of you that are new to using fountain pens or want to purchase your very first fountain pen may have heard of fountain pen converters but might not know what they are. Do you need one? Should you get one?

Fountain pen converters are designed to be used with fountain pens that are usually filled with ink cartridges. They “convert” these fountain pens from using ink cartridges to using bottled ink instead. The converter has a small reservoir that contains the ink.

The converter can be removed from the fountain pen, so you can still use ink cartridges if you choose. I personally feel that using bottled ink is advantageous because it is cheaper, comes in a wider variety of colors and is easier on the environment (as opposed to throwing away multiple plastic ink cartridges when they become empty). However, ink cartridges are definitely more convenient when you’re on the road.

Push-in style fountain pen converters are pushed on to the nib section of the pen, the same way an ink cartridge would be pushed on to the pen. Screw-in style converters screw on to the nib section of the pen. A previous blog post of ours [How to Install a LAMY Converter](#) provides photos and a description of how to attach a push-in style converter to a LAMY Safari fountain pen



(A [standard or universal piston converter](#) compared to [LAMY](#) and [Platinum](#) piston converters)

Many converters are brand-specific, in other words, they are specially made to fit a particular brand or model of fountain pen. Other converters are standard, or universal, and fit the many fountain pens with a standard or universal cartridge filling system. It is often easiest to figure out what kind of converter you need at the time you purchase your fountain pen.

Fountain pen converters have several different types of filling systems including piston, button, and squeeze (aerometric) fill. If you're having trouble filling your converter with ink you may have to try filling it 2 or 3 times before you get the air bubbles out and get a good fill. [How to Fill a Fountain Pen With a Piston Converter](#) provides an example of how to fill a fountain pen using a piston style converter. If you prefer video, LAMY has a video demonstrating [how to insert and refill a LAMY fountain pen converter](#).

Converters, as well as your fountain pen, do need to be cleaned occasionally especially when changing the ink color or brand. Usually cool water is sufficient, but if that doesn't do the trick try this home-made [fountain pen cleaning solution](#).

Not all fountain pens have ink cartridge filling systems, so not all fountain pens will require a converter. Fountain pens that do not require converters have a piston, aerometric, button or other filling system of their own. What kind of filling system do you like on your fountain pen?



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(Pilot Prera fountain pen with a Pilot push-in style piston converter)

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Posted by Cheryl at 07:00 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



June 01, 2011

Do I need a left-handed nib on my fountain pen if I'm a left-handed writer?



I am a left-handed writer and the first time I used a fountain pen I had no idea left-handed fountain pen nibs even existed. It didn't occur to me that there would be any problem using just a regular nib and I didn't notice any problems. Years later, I'm back to using fountain pens regularly and have discovered that there are a few nibs out there specially designed for lefties. Many ask the question: Is it really necessary to have one of these special nibs if you are left-handed?

Left-handed fountain pen nibs are generally more rounded on the tip with the idea of producing a smoother writing experience. This particularly applies to languages such as English that are written from left to right. When left-handed people such as myself write, the pen is often angled in such a way that the pointiest part of the pen, the nib, is being pushed along paper made of fibers that are not impervious to tearing and which offer some resistance. It's like taking a sharp nail or a pin and pushing it along a piece of paper at a 45 degree angle with the pointy end facing the direction it is being pushed. Likely you're going to end up piercing that piece of paper with your pin! In contrast, try taking that same pin and pulling it along that same piece of paper with the pointy end facing away from the direction it is being pulled. It feels smoother as you pull it and it is much less likely that you will pierce the paper. That would be more like the experience of a right-handed writer. So as you can see, pen nibs of all kinds have a huge influence on whether or not a lefty has a good or a bad writing experience.

I personally find that a good writing experience for a lefty does not stop at the kind of nib on the pen. It is extremely important to me that whatever ink I'm using dries quickly or else I'll smear it all over the place. The type of paper I use is also important since this affects the drying time of the ink. In addition, if paper is of very poor quality or tears easily, I may find myself poking holes in the paper with my pen or pencil. Each writer needs to experiment with different combinations of pen, ink and paper before discovering what works best for them.

I own many fountain pens with a variety of nibs, and three of them happen to have left-handed nibs. I personally find that the left-handed fountain pen nibs aren't necessarily any better or any worse than using a regular fountain pen nib. I'm not sure if you will have the same experience. I must say though, that I can't go wrong with my left-handed Pelikano Junior fountain pen. I don't always want to write with such a broad nib, but I appreciate its buttery-smoothness when I use it.

Left handed Pelikano



(Pelikan Pelikano fountain pen with a left-handed nib compared to a Pelikano with a regular nib. Note the modified grip and the rounded nib on the left-handed pen.)

For the left-handed writer that is new to fountain pens, I would suggest starting out with a nib that is middle-of-the-road, perhaps something like a [LAMY Safari](#) with a fine or medium nib. You might find extra-fine nibs to be too sharp and “pokey” at first, and broad nibs may lay down so much ink that you are smearing your writing too much. Another pen that I felt was easy to write with from the first time I picked it up is the [Platinum Preppy](#) with a fine nib, or for a nicer version of this pen with the same nib, the [Platinum Plaisir](#) fountain pen. If you get a chance to purchase a fountain pen with a left-handed nib, it is worth giving it a try. The [Pelikan Pelikano](#) and [Pelikano Junior](#) are both readily available with left-handed nibs. The Pelikan Pelikanos also have a grip that is modified to fit a left-handed writer. LAMY has [left-handed nibs](#), but at the moment they are difficult to come by in the USA and I couldn’t even find one while shopping in Europe. I’ve also heard of some lefties sending in their expensive nibs to be customized by a nibmeister, but I’ve never felt the need to do this myself.

Are you a left-handed writer? What kind of pen or fountain pen do you like to write with? Do you own any fountain pens with left-handed nibs?

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Posted by Cheryl at 06:05 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



May 11, 2011

Does Fountain Pen Ink Fade With Time?



Most fountain pen ink is dye-based rather than pigment-based, so the answer is yes, it does fade with the passing of time. The speed and degree of fading depend on a number of factors including the type of ink, type of paper, environmental conditions and exposure to light. I've noticed some fountain pen ink in various stages of fading in my old journals.

Iron-gall inks eventually fade to a brown color due to the iron that is in the ink. Other inks just fade to a paler shade of their original color or another unexpected hue. I found that the pen friends at [Fountain Pen Network](#) have done many of their own experiments to test what happens to various inks when exposed to UV light. It's worth doing a search there if you're wondering about the light resistance of a specific ink. If you are looking for a fade-resistant fountain pen ink there are several inks out there that may work for you.

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[Platinum Pens](#) has years of experience with fountain pens and ink and they have developed pigment-based inks for use with fountain pens that are water-resistant, fade-resistant and heat-resistant. [Platinum Carbon Black ink](#) is especially prized by artists and others looking for ink that is very water and light resistant. Platinum pigment ink is available in just a few colors: [black](#), [sepia](#), [blue](#) and [rose red](#). Some fountain pen users are nervous that using ink containing ultra-fine pigment powder may clog their pens. If this describes you, you might want to try this ink in an inexpensive pen first and follow the pen maintenance tips included in with this ink - these tips are originally written in Japanese but are mentioned in [English on our website](#).



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Noodler's Ink makes several types of ink that have what they describe as “bullet-proof” qualities including resistance to fading when exposed to light. I am unclear as to whether or not any of these inks include any sort of pigments in their formulas, but can tell you Noodler's ink is included among the favorite inks of many writers. Their UV light-resistant inks include such inks as regular Noodler's bullet-proof black, Noodler's Eternal inks, Noodler's Polar inks and any of the inks in the Warden's series such as Bad Black Moccasin and Bad Belted Kingfisher..

Do you use fade-resistant ink in your fountain pen? What type of permanent fountain pen ink is your favorite? Have you done any UV light tests with ink that you'd like to share?

Posted by Cheryl at 07:06 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



May 04, 2011

Why Use a Fountain Pen?



I mean seriously, do people even use fountain pens anymore? Actually, YES! Although they may seem like an archaic writing tool, fountain pens have a very devoted and loyal following. It seems like more than ever people are reaching for the 100 pens for \$2 deal on disposable ballpoint pens. So why do so many people continue to use fountain pens, when ballpoint and gel pens are so readily available and much much cheaper?

Many of the people using fountain pens today grew up doing so. Fountain pens used to be on the list of required school supplies. Those writers may simply be accustomed to using fountain pens or enjoy the nostalgic feeling that comes with it. Using a fountain pen may remind people of simpler times, when good handwriting skills were praised, rather than how many words per minute you can type. Fountain pens also used to be a great way for students to interact, sharing fountain pen ink, or trading nibs was similar to trading your ham sandwich for your best friend's chocolate chip cookie.



The laundry list of advantages that come with using fountain pens is endless. In my research I found a few things that attracted people to fountain pens. The novelty of using of a fountain pen is a great conversation starter and many like the attention they get when they use it. A student using what could be described by other students as a "grandpa pen" might enjoy the onslaught of "why are you using THAT?" or "Hey, that's really cool!". In a sea of laptops, ipads, and tablets, a student using an actual pen, let alone a fountain pen, can be shocking, and on some

occasions, very much appreciated.

There are also technical advantages of using a fountain pen. The liquid ink flow requires less pressure when writing which reduces cramping and overall discomfort when writing. Fountain pens are great for those with weak wrists or hands, and carpal tunnel. The quality and variety of fountain pens is also very attractive. Fountain pens, if well maintained, can last for decades. Fountain pens may be more expensive than a pack of ballpoint pens, but they last for a lifetime, making them much more “eco-friendly” than your usual go-to disposable pen. There is also more variety when it comes to fountain pens. They can be tailored to suit the needs of their user. Left-handed options, pen styles, nib sizes, and the vast spectrum of ink colors allow users to customize their pen to fit their unique personal style. In addition to their unique design, fountain pens offer a larger range of writing styles. Depending on nib, hold, and angle of the the pen, writing styles can be altered and changed accordingly.



So why, with all these advantages are people still reaching for disposable pens? There some aspects to using a fountain pen that may be off-putting for some. Fountain pens need careful maintenance in order to prevent leaking and promote long lasting use. Refilling your fountain pen can be messy and tedious, and although fountain pen inks can be sold at rather inexpensive prices some view buying them as unnecessary expenses. Taking fountain pens on airplanes can be risky because the air pressure changes at high altitude may cause ink explosions, and unless you like to unintentionally dye your clothes, most people view this as an inconvenience. Fountain pens must also be paired with high quality paper for best performance, which for some may also seem as an inconvenience. Although there may be some disadvantages with using a fountain pen, with proper maintenance and a thrifty eye most of these inconveniences can be avoided.

Let us know why you still use a fountain pen! We would love to hear your feedback!

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Posted by Karol at 07:30 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



April 20, 2011

Our Best Selling Fountain Pen Under \$50.00



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It probably comes as no surprise to many of our readers that the **LAMY Safari** is our best selling fountain pen under \$50.00. Whether you are considering buying your very first fountain pen, or are looking for a good daily writer, this might be just the pen you are looking for. It's the right combination of an inexpensive price combined with very good quality. What makes the LAMY Safari fountain pen so popular?

- Quality stainless steel nib is available in extra-fine, fine, medium and broad
- Nib is easy to exchange and can be **purchased separately**
- **Calligraphy nibs in 1.1mm, 1.5mm and 1.9mm** are also available for the Safari
- A **converter** can be purchased separately that allows you to use bottled ink
- The LAMY Safari comes in many colors ranging from **bright & fun** to **conservative**
- Durable ABS plastic body
- Ink window allows you to see when your ink level is running low
- Specially designed ergonomic grip
- Large clip allows you to attach this pen to many places
- Extra parts are available from **LAMY USA**
- MSRP is now \$35.00, but it can be purchased for less at many stores including **Writer's Bloc**



If you're wondering what other writers think of the LAMY Safari, here are a few quotes from the plethora of online reviews:

Brian at **Office Supply Geek** says: *"The thing that makes the Lamy Safari such a great beginner fountain pen in my opinion is not only that it offers quality and flexibility with a very smooth writing experience, but it is also a pen that you will want to use regardless of what other fountain pens you have around."*

John from **Coffee-Stained Memos** concludes: *"I highly recommend the Lamy Safari to anyone wishing to take the plunge into fountain pen writing. In fact, I would recommend this pen to anyone who likes fountain pens."*

Brad at **Miscellany & Cacophony** discusses in detail the design of the LAMY Safari and concludes: *"Now, if you don't have a Lamy Safari, go get one! And if you already have one, get another! You won't regret it."*

Do you own one or more LAMY Safaris? What do you think of this popular fountain pen? What is your favorite Safari color?



Tweet   



April 06, 2011

Student Calligraphy and Fountain Pens

We were recently contacted by a schoolteacher who wanted to introduce her students to the "lost art" of calligraphy and writing with a fountain pen. She was looking for supplies that were both affordable and capable of withstanding the wear and tear of her students. Fortunately, Writer's Bloc carries a wide selection of calligraphy supplies and fountain pens that are tailored to the needs of students. Our hope is that introducing students to calligraphy and fountain pens will bring about a newfound appreciation for writing. Here are some ideas for teachers and students who want to try their hand at calligraphy and using fountain pens.

Platinum Preppy Fountain Pens



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The Platinum Preppy Fountain Pen is a good choice for a first fountain pen. This fountain pen is of good quality for its price and is a great way to supply the classroom with affordable quality fountain pens. Students will be able to choose from an array of colors and find one that suits them best. (Also available as [set of seven pens.](#))

Pelikano Junior Fountain Pen



The Pelikano Junior Fountain Pen is great for our aspiring little writers since this pen is specially designed for children. The [Pelikano Junior Fountain Pen](#) is available in four different colors and is also available with a left-handed nib for all the left-handed writers.

[LAMY Safari Fountain Pen](#)



For older students, the LAMY Safari is a popular choice. This fountain pen is a favorite daily writer of both teachers and students around the world. The [LAMY Safari fountain pen](#) comes in several colors and different nib sizes.

[Pelikan Script Calligraphy Pens \(set of 3\)](#)



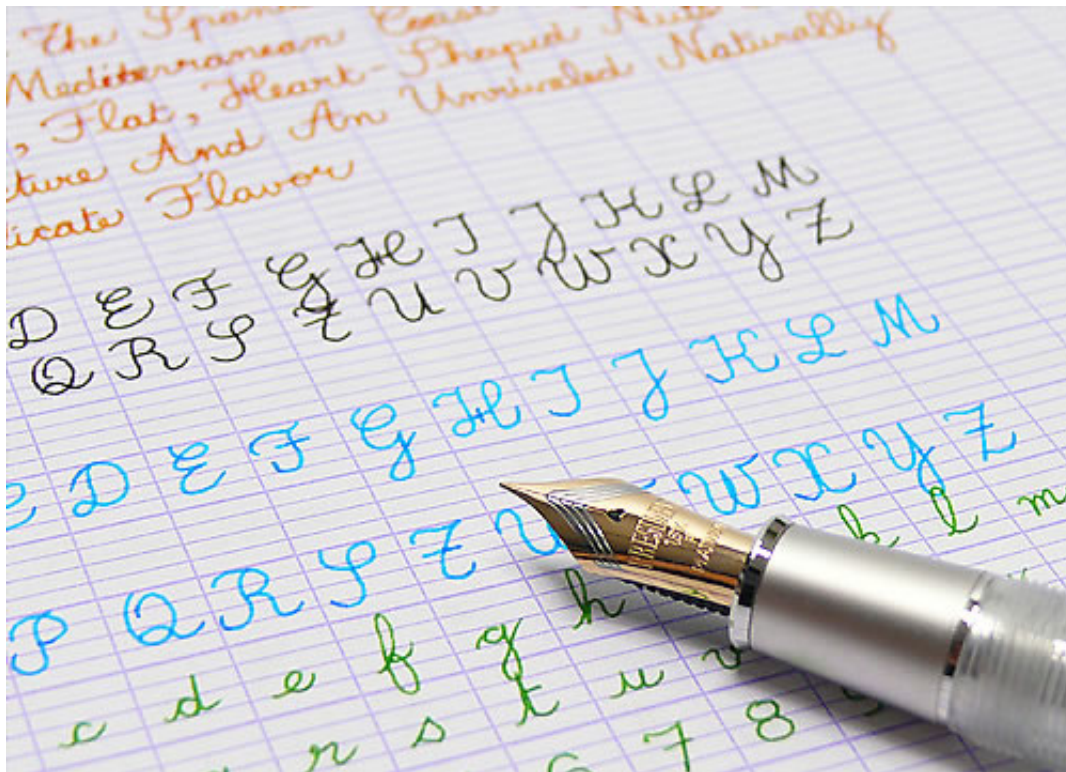
For those new to calligraphy the Pelikan Script Calligraphy Pen is a nice starter pen. This set of three is great for the classroom and includes nibs of three different sizes.

Introduction to Calligraphy Lettering Cards



The Introduction to Calligraphy Lettering Cards from Brause are a useful guide for practicing Calligraphy. Introduce your students to nine different lettering styles and let them teach each other!

French Rule Paper



Many teachers and students in the USA are unfamiliar with the **French ruled paper** commonly used by students in France and other countries. This paper is an excellent tool for anyone who wants to learn cursive writing, to improve their handwriting or to practice calligraphy. For more information about French rule paper you may wish read one of our previous blog posts: [What is French Ruled Paper?](#)

Do you love writing as much as we do? What tools do you personally find useful to help students and others to develop the art of calligraphy and handwriting?

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Posted by Karol at 06:47 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



February 09, 2011

If Fountain Pens Were Cars

Have you ever thought about comparing your favorite fountain pen to a car? If so, what kind of car would it be?

For the Enthusiast, driving a car is less about the purpose of getting from point A to point B, and all about the experience of driving. Driving is pure joy: the beauty of the machine itself, the G force on the curves, the wind in your hair, the braking power, the sound of the engine. The driving experience is a package deal that must involve all five senses. This type of driver may own a BMW M3 or Porsche 911.

How about a fountain pen Enthusiast? The Enthusiast owns a fountain pen not just for the purpose of putting marks on paper, but rather to experience the pure joy of writing. The beauty of the pen, the feel of the nib against paper, the sounds the interaction between nib and paper produce, the variation of line width, the beautiful colors and shading of ink, these are all part of this experience. This is what is known as “pen touch” in some Asian lands. Often, Asian and Italian made fountain pens are created with the full “pen touch” experience in mind. The Enthusiast may own a **Platinum Maki-e** or an **Aurora Optima Auroloide** fountain pen, both of which, in addition to being fine writing tools, are works of art. Their flagship pen models, the **Platinum President** and the **Aurora Ipsilon Deluxe**, both have similar qualities.



The next type of driver we can think of is all about function. Getting from point A to point B is the most important thing with zero concern over looks and features. Once this driver gets to their destination there is little to no recollection of how they got there, they just arrived. I'm afraid to mention what type of car this person might drive in case it might be yours, so I'll just leave it up to your own imagination.

I have a feeling that a pen owner that is only concerned about function would not own a fountain pen in the first place. A ball point pen from the local discount store would probably be sufficient. However, there are inexpensive fountain pens that function reliably enough that you don't have to think much about maintaining them or wonder whether or not they will start when you pick them up to write. The [Platinum Preppy fountain pen](#) comes to mind as one of the most reliable, inexpensive pens that I own. It's easy to refill with [cartridges](#) too.



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Then there is the comfort driver that likes to feel as if they are floating on air as they pass by the sights and scenery. This type of driver is not interested much in sensory perception as they drive, rather priority is placed on comfort. Thinking of driving in comfort both the Buick Regal and Lincoln Continental are cars that come to mind. Often these cars are loaded with features to provide the most comfortable ride possible.

Writers that place priority on comfort often own fountain pens. When writing with a fountain pen less pressure on

the paper is required to write thus reducing writing fatigue. Some fountain pens also have ergonomic grips to make writing easier. Gold nibs are often preferred by those seeking comfort since gold nibs tend to have a softer quality than steel nibs. German made fountain pens, such as those made by LAMY and Pelikan, are well known for their comfortable, soft touch. A comfort writer may own an elegant writing instrument such as a [Pelikan Souveran M800 Blue o' Blue](#) or a sophisticated [LAMY 2000 fountain pen](#) with its buttery soft platinum coated 14K gold nib. Comfort can be found in inexpensive pens too such as the [LAMY Safari](#) or [Pelikano Junior](#) which are used daily by many writers.

So how about you? What kind of fountain pen do you “drive”?



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Posted by Cheryl at 08:42 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



January 19, 2011

Introducing the Pelikan M205 Duo Highlighter Fountain Pen



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Recently, Pelikan released the [M205 Duo Highlighter](#), a fountain pen specifically made for use as a highlighter pen. What can you expect from this welcome addition to the Pelikan pen family?



The M205 Duo Highlighter has the usual desirable qualities common to Pelikan fountain pens. It has a reliably good piston filling system and a high quality, smooth-writing stainless steel nib. The transparent yellow resin body is nicely accented with chrome trim and the distinguished Pelikan pocket clip. When you reach for this pen, the bright yellow color won't let you forget its primary purpose - to be used as a highlighter! The pen weighs 0.5 oz (12g) empty, and is 5" long when capped, 5 7/8" when posted and 4 3/4" without the cap.



The nib is a BB size, or in other words broad-broad or extra broad. This is a rounded nib with an iridium tip. The line it produces is meant to be used for underlining, marking, editing and proofing your documents. As illustrated on the special box it comes in, if you want to highlight an entire word you'll need to scribble back and forth over the word a few times. It does not produce a line a few millimeters in width like a calligraphy pen or a felt chisel-tip highlighter. In addition to using this pen as a highlighter, the BB nib makes this pen suitable for everyday writing in the ink color of your choice.

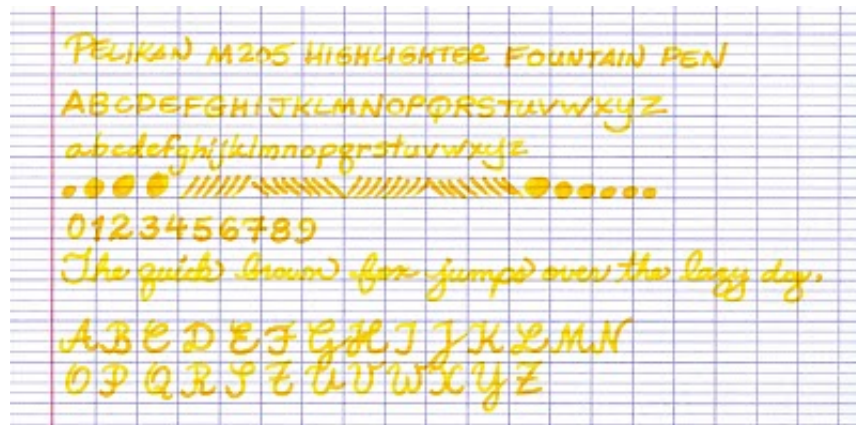


Pelikan includes a 30ml bottle of bright fluorescent yellow M205 Duo Highlighter Ink along with the purchase of your pen. The ink can also be [purchased separately](#) when you need a refill. Interestingly, the ink box states "Attention! The highlighter ink is only suited for the M205 Duo fountain pen. Do not use with other writing utensils!" From my own past experience I've seen yellow ink stain plastics - perhaps this is the reason for the warning and the reason that the pen itself is bright yellow. Does anyone know for sure? If so, please tell us!

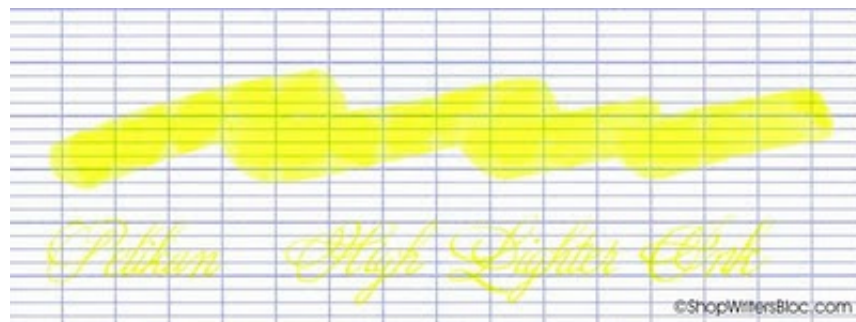


The packaging of the M205 is quite fun. The outside of the white box is accented with grey print that appears as though it has already been highlighted with the pen. The box opens to reveal fluorescent yellow panels printed with care instructions in 10 different languages. Some of the text on the box states that the M205 Duo “combines two functions that, together, form one entity. It is a highlighter and a fountain pen, it marks and paraphrases. A well-functioning and perfectly balanced team whose members complement one another while also being able to stand alone.”

Here is an M205 Duo writing sample using [Noodler's Sunrise](#) highlighting ink:



Here is a sample of the M205 highlighting ink on [Clairefontaine French rule paper](#) using both a cotton swab and a [Brause Steno nib](#):



Have you had the chance to use the Pelikan M205 Duo Highlighter yet? If so, what do you think? Have you ever used fountain pens as highlighters?

Posted by Cheryl at 07:44 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



Eyedropper Fountain Pen Pros and Cons



The biggest advantage of [converting a fountain pen into eyedropper fill](#) is the huge reservoir of ink! No need for converters or cartridges, the whole barrel is full of ink. It's easy to clean out the barrel when you want to change ink colors or want to store your fountain pen. If you've got a transparent pen and colorful ink it's especially fun to use!

Fountain pens can be converted to eyedropper fill as long as they do not have any holes in the body for the ink to leak out of or are not made from special materials that would be harmed by direct contact with ink or [silicone grease](#). Some pens are better suited than others for this conversion because the design of the area where the feed and the barrel screw together can affect how well the pen seals.

However, modern fountain pens are not designed to be eyedropper fill pens, and because of this there are some problems to be aware of. Even when these pens are sealed correctly with silicone grease and/or [rubber O-rings](#), they are still prone to leaking.

When there is heat, the air inside the pen can expand forcing ink out of the nib or from the seal creating a big mess! Due to this problem it is often necessary to [refill your eyedropper pen](#) when it gets to about 1/3 full of ink. In my case, I have hot hands and have to refill my pen when it gets to 1/2 full, otherwise beads of ink start dripping out of the nib spoiling whatever I'm writing on. If you carry the pen in your shirt pocket you could experience the same results. I'm unsure of how much hot weather is a problem because I live in Portland, Oregon where it rarely gets really hot. Does anyone have personal experience with this? If so, please share by leaving a comment!

[Air travel](#) can produce the same undesirable results as heat - as the air pressure changes in the cabin of the plane, the air inside the pen expands and can force ink to leak out of the pen. This is why I never take eyedropper fill pens with me when I'm travelling by air. In fact, I do not travel anywhere with my eyedropper pens! They sit on my desk, nibs pointing up, to be used where I can easily do a clean-up in case of ink leakage.

In my case, the possibility of having an ink leak and having to keep the pen at least 1/2 full of ink offsets the benefit of having a large ink supply in the barrel. I only have access to 1/2 a barrel of ink at a time anyway before it starts to leak. Sure, it's easy to see the level of ink and know when you have to refill if you have a transparent pen, but what about pens that are not transparent?

With all of their disadvantages, many people still find that eyedropper pens are a nice alternative to traditional piston fill, converter or cartridge fill fountain pens. What are your thoughts and experiences with using eyedropper fill fountain pens?

Previous blog posts about eyedropper fill fountain pens:

[Pen modification - convert into eyedropper fill](#)

[Should you use an O-ring to convert your fountain pen into an eyedropper?](#)

[When should you refill your eyedropper pen?](#)

[Is it safe to take a fountain pen on an airplane?](#)

August 04, 2010

How to Care For Your LAMY Fountain Pen



To keep a fountain pen functioning properly it needs to be cleaned from time to time. When ink comes into contact with air it dries out and can prevent ink from flowing freely in your fountain pen. To avoid any unwanted chemical reactions, it's a good idea to clean your fountain pen well before switching to a different ink. If you aren't going to be using a fountain pen for awhile, before storing it a good cleaning is a must. When **LAMY pens** are cared for and maintained properly, in the USA LAMY offers a life-time warranty. So what is the recommended way to clean a LAMY pen? We found the following helpful tips on the [LAMY website](#):

Warning: Do not use any kind of detergent when washing your pen. After you have cleaned it, dry the front part thoroughly and drain it completely using an absorbent piece of material.

Piston Pen

If the ink supply channel becomes encrusted, rinse the pen several times with clean water. The piston mechanism is easy to rinse effectively. It does not become encrusted so quickly because the device cleans itself automatically every time you fill it.

Cartridge Pen

If the ink supply channel becomes encrusted, soak the entire front part in clean water until the encrusted ink is dissolved. You can also wash it out under warm, running water or add a converter and rinse through several times.

Fountain Pen with Converter

Fit the converter and rinse with water. Repeat this procedure as often as necessary until the water you use for cleaning runs out clear.

Posted by Cheryl at 08:19 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)

July 07, 2010

Introduction to the LAMY 2000



Testifying to the timelessness of its design, the LAMY 2000 has been in production since its introduction in 1966. Gerd A. Müller, a man who was one of the advocates of the **Bauhaus** movement, is the designer of the LAMY 2000. The Bauhaus principle of functional design: 'form follows function' is clearly seen in the stylish simplicity of this writing instrument.

The LAMY 2000 is made of a special fiberglass resin called Makrolon that is resistant to impact and weathering, and withstands high and low temperatures. The large capacity piston-filling system of the fountain pen is designed to be used with bottled ink. It has a 14k gold nib plated with platinum to match the color scheme of black with stainless steel accents. The nib is hooded, or mostly covered, by the section or grip area of the pen.

The LAMY 2000 is available as a **fountain pen**, **ballpoint pen**, **multi-color ballpoint pen**, **rollerball pen** and **mechanical pencil**. There have been a few variations to the original design, including the **Edition 2000 fountain pen**, made of brushed stainless steel with a single band of Makrolon; the **LAMY 2000 taxus**, a ballpoint pen made of golden-yellow yew wood; **LAMY 2000 blackwood**, a ballpoint pen made of grenadilla, or African blackwood; and in 2009 a **ballpoint made of solid titanium** with a contrasting shiny platinum trim.

LAMY USA **warranties** its writing instruments for the life of the product, so there are no worries if any repairs are required during normal use of their pen or pencils.

Check out a few reviews of the LAMY 2000:

Julie at "Whatever" wishes she would have bought a LAMY 2000 fountain pen sooner!

Doug at D*I*Y Planner notes this fountain pen "writes incredibly smooth on almost all the types of paper."

The review by Piggogm mentions something to keep in mind if you decide to purchase this fountain pen: "The Extra Fine is much closer to what most people would describe as a fine, and even what some would probably call medium. Whatever nib width you usually prefer, go one finer with a Lamy 2000."

Dave's Mechanical Pencils gives us some insights on what it's like to use the pencil version of the LAMY 2000.

Have you used a LAMY 2000 fountain pen, pen or pencil? Feel free to share your thoughts with us about your LAMY 2000 writing experience!

Posted by Cheryl at 07:34 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



June 02, 2010

What is the Pelikan Super Pirat Ink Eradicator?

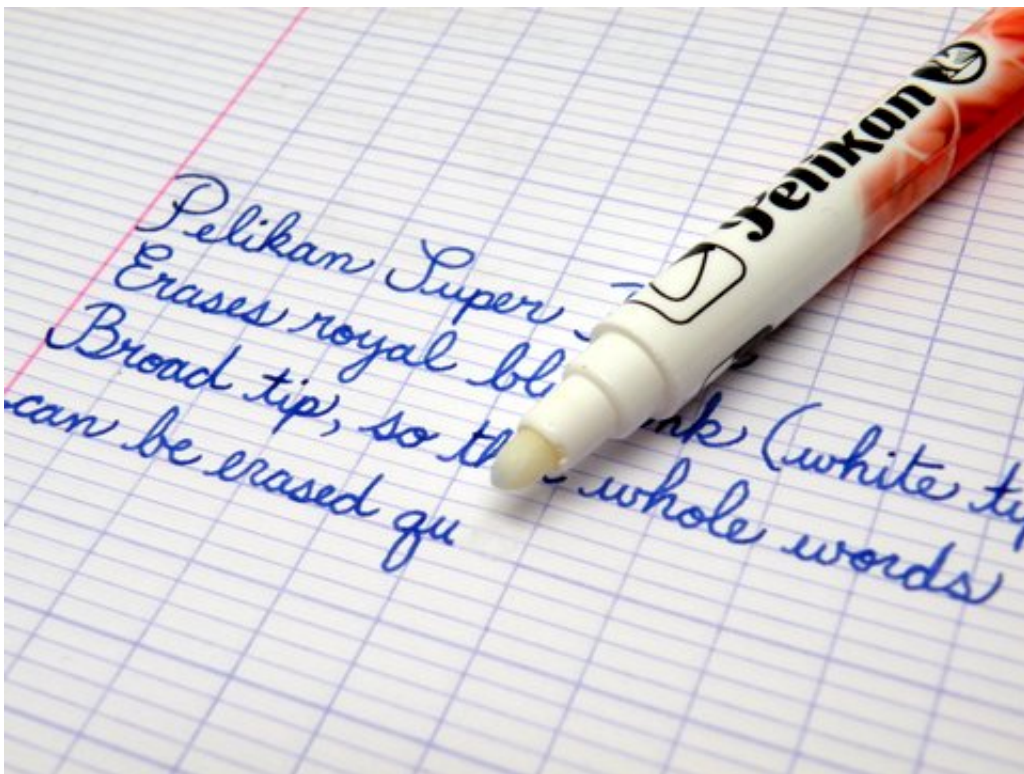
Pelikan makes a great tool for fountain pen users called the **Super Pirat ink eradicator**. This is not an erasable pen,

rather, it is a correction pen. The Super Pirat ink eradicator pen is designed with students in mind since it can be used to correct mistakes when you are writing with a fountain pen filled with washable or erasable blue ink. Let me demonstrate...

I'm writing with my LAMY Safari filled with a LAMY blue ink cartridge and I make a mistake!



The white end of the Pelikan Super Pirat ink eradicator neutralizes the blue color of the fountain pen ink and makes it seem invisible. This neutralizing effect continues long after the Super Pirat pen dries on the page so you cannot use blue fountain pen ink to make your correction.



Conveniently, the Super Pirat's other end has a blue ink pen that is unaffected by the ink neutralizer so it can be used to write in your correction. The Super Pirat's blue pen is not meant to be used for taking notes, it is only to be used for making corrections.



There are several kinds of readily available, erasable blue fountain pen inks including: [LAMY Blue](#), [Pelikan Royal Blue](#), [Aurora Blue](#), [J. Herbin Bleu Myosotis](#) and many many more. Pelikan even makes ink eradicators for [pink](#) and [purple](#) Pelikan inks, but we have never seen these in the USA. What kind of erasable blue ink do you use?

Posted by Cheryl at 08:01 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



April 21, 2010

Equation for the Perfect Writing Tools



If you are particular about what you write with like me, you may agree that the following equation, when put together just right, adds up to a great writing experience:

Pen (A) + Ink (B) + Paper (C) = The Perfect Writing Experience (YAY)!

There is no right or wrong answer to this equation since the answer will depend on the preferences and tastes of the writer.

I'm still in the process of experimenting with pens, inks and papers to see what works for me. Being a Lefty adds some additional challenges since I'm always trying to avoid a big mess of smeared ink. Much to my dismay, I've discovered that I am not able to use [Clairefontaine's](#) fabulously smooth 90g white paper for everyday writing with a fountain pen. Almost all fountain pen ink dries too slowly on this paper for my style of left-handed writing and I make a huge mess. *Sniff* However, I can use this paper successfully with a fine nib [Platinum Preppy fountain pen](#) using [Platinum ink cartridges](#), [Pentel Energel](#) or [Slicci gel pens](#), or some other non-fountain pens and pencils. I'm in the process of testing other types of Clairefontaine paper such as the [Graf it sketch pads](#) to see if I can use it regularly with fountain pens. It seems that I need a paper that is slightly absorbent and not too coated, that still resists ink feathering and bleed-through. Right now I am loving [J. Herbin Ink](#) since it seems to have a pretty decent drying time. As regards to the pen I use, well, is it possible to have too many pens? I tend to write with whatever I'm in the mood for that particular day.

This is where I need to hear from you. Please leave a comment and tell me what your perfect writing tools are. I'd love to get some valuable tips from other writers!

Posted by Cheryl at 04:09 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(7\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



April 07, 2010

Aurora Fountain Pen Links

We love Aurora fountain pens! Here are some of our favorite Aurora links:

First, this is a great video on how Aurora pens are made.



Blogger [Lady Dandelion](#) takes a great snapshot of an [Aurora Talentum in fire engine red](#).

[Bleubug](#) has some interesting information about a cool [vintage Aurora 98 fountain pen](#) with a piston filling knob that extends from and retracts into the barrel with a "click".

[Rhodia Drive "What's Your Favorite Pen"](#) has a nice photo of the bright & sunny yellow Aurora Ipsilon.

Of course, we have to mention the [Aurora Pens Italy](#) website, the mothership of all Aurora pens. See anything you like that we don't have in our shop? [Send us an email](#) and perhaps we can special order it for you.

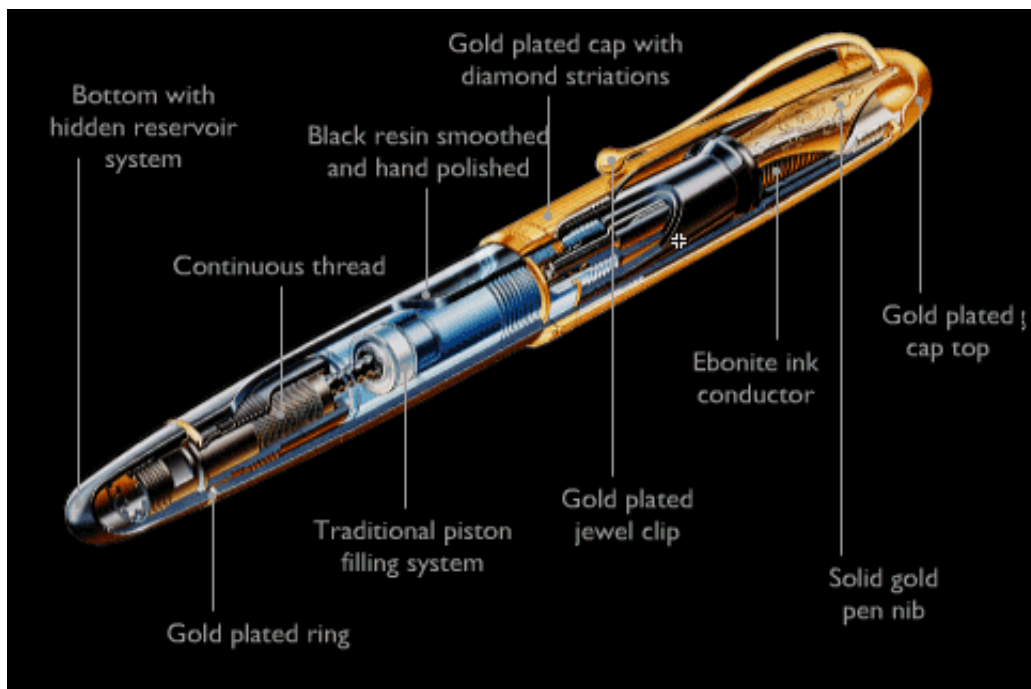
You'll find a selection of our favorite [Aurora fountain pens](#) at Writer's Bloc. What's your favorite Aurora pen?

Posted by Cheryl at 11:16 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



March 23, 2010

Aurora Fountain Pen Hidden Reservoir System



Check out this detailed diagram (courtesy of [Aurora Pens, Italy](#)) revealing the structure of an [Aurora Fountain Pen](#).

An interesting and unique feature of many fountain pens made by Aurora is referred to in this picture: the hidden reservoir system. (However, it seems the diagram above should be pointing to the piston to indicate the hidden reservoir.) Instead of having a flat bottom as most pistons do, the bottom of the Aurora piston has a small indented chamber that holds extra ink. When your ink seems to have run out, turning the piston counter-clockwise all the way down to the feed will push the ink contained in this small chamber into the feed of the fountain pen. Aurora's handy hidden reservoir system gives you an extra page or so of writing before you have to refill!



Close-up of the feed on an Aurora fountain pen. There is a small "post" that sticks out.



A small reservoir hidden in the bottom of the piston contains extra ink.



Turn the piston counter-clockwise all the way down to the feed to force the extra ink into the feed.



The hidden ink reservoir is now empty, allowing you to write another page. A feature unique to Aurora fountain pens.

Posted by Cheryl at 10:17 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



March 17, 2010

What is Nib Creep?

Nib creep is when ink from a fountain pen "creeps" out from between the slit in the nib onto the surface of the nib. According to the experts on [The Fountain Pen Network](#) this can happen due to a few different reasons including the type of ink in the pen, the type of metal the nib is made of or a small imperfection in the slit of the nib can be responsible for drawing ink out on to the nib. Some people do not like the way it looks or are concerned about staining something with the excess ink, however, a bit of nib creep does not seriously affect the performance of a fountain pen. I have a fountain pen that has some nib creep that seems to happen most during hot weather, but it does not affect the way it writes. For me, I don't find a little bit of nib creep to be particularly bothersome.



Posted by Cheryl at 10:49 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



March 03, 2010

Caring For Your Aurora Fountain Pen

Once you've invested in a fine quality writing instrument such as an [Aurora fountain pen](#), one of the first questions many people ask is, "how should I take care of my fountain pen?" [Aurora Pens](#) recommends both "love and cleanliness."

To clean your Aurora fountain pen, the manufacturer recommends using exclusively cold water, using water to fill and empty the pen and/or cartridge repeatedly, until the water rinses clean. To clean the outside of the pen you may simply use soap and water and then thoroughly dry the pen.

Aurora advises that to safely clean your fountain pens you should "absolutely avoid any use of alcohol, solvents or hot water which could ruin your pen and compromise its surfaces." To eliminate any ink stains simply leave the pen in cold water, even for a few days if necessary.

If you should happen to damage your pen from an impact or fall, Aurora has [experts that can repair your pen](#) and return it to you as good as new.

As far as the "love" goes, we trust that you already know how to love your fountain pens! We love our [fountain pens](#) too! Depending on how you are going to use your pen, it can be helpful to have a nice [pen case](#) to store it in.

If you have any helpful tips on how to care for fountain pens we would love to hear your comments.



Posted by Cheryl at 08:46 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



January 27, 2010

Pilot Parallel Calligraphy Pen Gradation Function



We love the Pilot Parallel Calligraphy Pen and its ability to produce graded lettering! For those of you unfamiliar with this function we are providing a simple explanation along with some samples.

We found this definition of "graded" on thefreedictionary.com: "(Fine Arts & Visual Arts / Colours) to change or cause to change imperceptibly, as from one colour, tone, or degree to another." In other words, as you are writing with the Pilot Parallel Pen you can make your lettering gradually change from one color to another.

To do this, you will need 2 Parallel Pens filled with different ink colors. Suppose you are writing with a Parallel Pen filled with violet ink and you would like to create lettering that slowly changes in color from green back to violet again. Hold your Parallel pen filled with violet ink so that the nib is pointing up. Hold another Parallel pen filled with green ink so that the nib is pointing down. Touch the nib of the green pen to the nib of the violet pen and hold the nibs together for several seconds. Some of the green ink will have transferred to the nib of the pen with the violet ink.

When you resume writing with your Parallel pen filled with violet ink, you will find that the lettering begins as a green color and as you continue to write your letters will gradually become violet again. This technique produces beautiful graded lettering that can add an extra special touch to your calligraphy creations. Have fun and email us your results! We'd love to see your designs and feature some of them on our blog.

Pilot Parallel Calligraphy Pens are available with **1.5mm**, **2.4mm**, **3.8mm** and **6.0mm** nibs and at Writer's Bloc you can also get them in a **set of four**. If you're planning to give the graded lettering a try, there is a convenient box of **12 ink cartridges in assorted colors**. (Just a note: Pilot recommends using only Pilot Mixable Color IC-P3 ink cartridges with this pen.)



Posted by Cheryl at 05:24 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



January 13, 2010

Platinum President Fountain Pen Review



I've been mostly using [Pelikan fountain pens](#) with forgiving, rounded, [left-handed nibs](#) lately, and decided it was time for a change. [Platinum Pens](#) is known for making high-quality nibs, and I felt a good place to start would be their flagship fountain pen, the President, with an attractive 18K gold fine nib.

[Platinum Pens](#) is a Japanese pen maker, so their fine nib size is more like an extra fine in a [LAMY](#) or [Pelikan](#) nib. I normally have medium-size handwriting and I wanted to see how small, but still legible, I could write. This nib is amazing for small handwriting and narrow rule paper! I think it even made my handwriting look better than usual. And to think for years I was stuck in the rut of writing only with medium ballpoint pens because the fine ballpoints tended to poke through the bad quality of paper I used (or wouldn't write at all) and I had given up finding other pens that I wouldn't smear.

The President fountain pen took me a little while to get used to since the nib is so much finer than the nibs I've been using lately and the grip is smooth, without the "training wheels" of the ergonomic grip that some pens have. However, once I figured out the best way to hold it we became fast friends and I'm not sure if it is my imagination but the pen seemed to write smoother and smoother as I went along.

Even though the fine nib is very fine, the Platinum President fountain pen puts down a lot of ink. I went through ink more quickly than I first thought I would. I did have to make an adjustment in the paper I used once I switched to a Noodler's ink that dried slowly. Instead of 90g Clairefontaine paper, the 80g Exacompta Basics paper seemed to absorb the ink a tiny bit and allowed it to dry more quickly so I was able to avoid smearing. It would have been nice if this pen had been designed with a piston filling system so that it could hold more ink than the converter does. Regular [Platinum cartridges](#) do seem to hold more ink than their [converter](#), but I tend to like ink in unusual colors.

Another nice thing about the President fountain pen is that it takes a very light touch to write with it. I am sure it will take me years to un-train myself from using the ballpoint pen "death grip", but it will be worth it! Definitely less writing fatigue. I have small hands and like writing with light-weight pens, so I prefer writing with the cap off of the President. The President I used for this review is a [demonstrator](#), and the material it is made of seems like it would be very durable.

Overall I found the Platinum President fountain pen was a pleasure to use! Members of popular pen forums speak highly of the smoothness of Platinum nibs. Do any of you use Platinum Pens? What has been your experience with Platinum fountain pens?

Posted by Cheryl at 10:43 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



January 06, 2010

Calligraphy Pens



Calligraphy is an art form that almost anyone can enjoy. If you've said "I don't have a artistic bone in my body", you may be surprised that with the right pen in hand, you could have a hidden artistic flare you never knew you had. Recently here at Writer's Bloc I was able to "play" with some great Calligraphy Pens.

The **Pilot Parallel Calligraphy Pen 3.8mm** has a wide nib that makes crisp, large letters. This pen, as well as the **6.0mm** nib Parallel Pen, work well for projects that call for large lettering. Great for personalizing blank cards or to make signs that need to be easy to read. For smaller lettering, the Parallel Pen is also available in **2.4mm** and **1.5mm** nib sizes. This pen has a special gradation function which allows you to change your writing gradually from one color to another color.

The **Pelikan Script Calligraphy Pen** with the 1.5mm nib was my favorite because the nib size made what I thought was the just right stroke width for calligraphy writing in my personal letters and cards. The angle and nib are given to making clean calligraphy letters. A must have for the calligraphy writers among us. You can get the Pelikan Script Calligraphy Pen with 1.0mm and 2.0mm nibs as well.

The **LAMY Joy Calligraphy Pen** with the 1.1mm nib makes a finer line that is very appealing to those of us who write a little smaller. A great Pen!! It glides smoothly across the paper, almost making writing effortless. The LAMY Joy Calligraphy Pen makes beautiful writing fun. This pen also comes in 1.5mm and 1.9mm nib sizes.

All three of these Calligraphy Pens are well made fountain pens. They feel great in the hand and flow smoothly and evenly. They truly make for unique and stylish lettering that gives individuality to any writing endeavor.

Discover the artist in you and have fun doing it!!

Lorraine at Writer's Bloc

Posted by Cheryl at 01:07 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



December 02, 2009

Aurora Fountain Pens



Aurora has been producing finely crafted fountain pens and luxury goods in Torino, Italy since 1919 and has become the most prestigious writing instrument manufacturer in Italy. Aurora was founded by a rich textile merchant who had long dreamed of creating this company and the first true Italian fountain pen. From the beginning, Aurora was known for producing some of the finest made in Italy products using high quality materials such as platinum, gold, silver, diamonds, emeralds and other precious stones.

Aurora's style combines artistic tradition and Italian design in the production of their writing instruments. Much detailed and skilled hand-work goes into the manufacture of all of their own fountain pen parts including gold and steel nibs. Their line of pens ranges from the fabulous **Diamond fountain pen**, crowned by an exquisite diamond cabochon and one thousand nine hundred and nineteen "Fourc" certified De Beers diamonds to create the most exclusive, valuable writing instrument in the world, to reasonably priced school pens and everyday pens such as the Ipsilon and Style.

Aurora also manufactures elegant leather goods such as pen pouches, wallets, organizers, handbags and more. They have created a line of paper goods that are an identical reproduction of the paper used in the royal courts of Europe. Aurora wishes to continue to be an interpreter of good taste, technological innovation and all the style that has marked the history of Italian taste, customs and design.

Writer's Bloc is happy to introduce **Aurora Fountain Pens** to the collection in our shop.

Posted by Cheryl at 03:02 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



November 25, 2009

Pelikan Pelikano Junior - A Lefty's Review



I was rather excited to get my hands on another fountain pen specifically designed for left-handed writers - the [Pelikan Pelikano Junior with an "L" nib](#). It is an amazingly smooth writer for such an inexpensive fountain pen!

This pen is designed with beginning fountain pen users in mind and is actually a children's school fountain pen. The nib is rounded in shape so it is not "pokey" (especially important for us lefties) and it is very forgiving. I can even write a fine line with it when the nib is upside-down!

The nib is a Pelikan "L" size for left-handed writers, or an "A" size on the version of the [Pelikano Jr. for right-handed writers](#). It makes a medium-broad size line and has a very wet ink flow. In fact, if you carry this pen with you, you'd better have an extra ink cartridge on hand for when your ink runs out ([Pelikan 4001 giant ink cartridges](#) are a good choice). Some people might not appreciate this small inconvenience, but I like changing ink colors frequently so this is one thing about the Pelikano Jr. that I really like. Since this pen lays down a lot of ink, for a lefty I would suggest using an ink with a decent drying time to help prevent any smudges. Because it produces a bold line, this is also a good pen for those of us that like to use light or bright fountain pen ink colors.

The funky, minimalist and colorful design of the Pelikano Jr. instantly appealed to me. The pen is rather chunky, but not heavy, and provides a good rubber grip designed to assist with finger placement. When you unscrew the pen there is a smooth area to attach a name sticker to (plain stickers are included with the Pelikano Jr.). When the pen is screwed back together you can read your name through the pen barrel, which is helpful to keep well-meaning right-handed friends, students, etc from swiping one of your favorite everyday fountain pens.

The Pelikano Junior has no clip, and the body is very plain except for a couple of oval shaped bumps to keep the pen from rolling and the cap has the word "Pelikano" on it in raised lettering. I like to write with the cap off of this pen. I would imagine that the rather large size barrel on this pen would be helpful to assist small hands learning penmanship for the first time, as well as for older ones that have a bit of trouble gripping a pen.

The Pelikano Junior fountain pen is a great pen for everyday use and it has fans that include people of all ages! The bright translucent Pelikano Jr. colors include [green](#) (my favorite), [blue](#), [red](#) and [yellow](#).

Posted by Cheryl at 08:13 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



September 16, 2009

Steel vs Gold Fountain Pen Nibs



Some people feel that to obtain the ultimate experience in writing one needs to invest in a fountain pen with a gold nib. But is this really true? Is a gold nib really superior?

There are a couple of reasons that a gold nib could indeed be superior. For one, acidic or alkaline ink will not discolor or corrode a gold nib, whereas a stainless steel nib can eventually discolor and corrode. This was more of an issue in years past when inks generally tended to be more acidic than they are today.

As well, the workmanship is usually superior on high quality pens with gold nibs, with these pens and nibs getting much more care, attention and hand-work in the factory. Plus the appearance of some gold nibs is truly stunning! High quality fountain pens are considered by some to be family heirlooms and are valued by collectors around the world.

Since gold is a softer metal than steel some think that the writing experience with gold nibs is "softer" or more flexible. But this is not truly the case because once gold is bent or flexed it does not tend to return to its original shape.

During writing, the gold portion of a fountain pen nib is not actually the part of the nib that comes in contact with the paper. All gold and stainless steel fountain pen nibs (except some of the cheapest with a low quality) have a ball under the nib made of hard metal, such as iridium, that comes in contact with the paper. The quality and workmanship of this ball, or tip, will definitely have an effect on whether or not the pen has a superior performance.

We have found that some stainless steel nibs can rival the performance of some gold fountain pen nibs. Even an inexpensive [LAMY Safari fountain pen](#) can write "like butter" and provide a very satisfying writing experience.

So should you purchase a fountain pen with a gold nib? That's entirely up to you! Once you get started with your fountain pen collection you will likely come to appreciate the beauty and workmanship that goes into high quality fountain pens with gold nibs. [Happy shopping!](#)

Posted by Cheryl at 07:11 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



August 11, 2009

How to Fill a Fountain Pen With a Piston Converter



Take the cap off the fountain pen and remove the barrel by unscrewing the pen. Attach the piston converter to the pen if it isn't attached already. You will need a bottle of fountain pen ink with enough ink in it to completely immerse the nib of the pen.



Immerse the nib in the bottle of ink and twist the top of the converter counterclockwise to move the piston down and to force the air out of the converter.



Turn the top of the converter clockwise to move the piston in an upwards direction and to begin filling the converter with ink. Be sure that the nib is entirely submerged in the ink!



Be patient and wait for a little while before removing the nib from the ink to allow the converter to fill completely.

Posted by Cheryl at 07:45 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



July 21, 2009

Platinum Pen Company



2009 marks the 90th anniversary of the Platinum Pen Company, one of Japan's leading manufacturers of fine writing instruments. Platinum Pens is well known especially for the high quality of their fountain pen nibs.

In the 1930's the Platinum Pen Company began to manufacture maki-e pens including lacquer carving and pearl inlay. Maki-e is an art that has been around for hundreds of years and is created by sprinkling silver or gold powder onto urushi lacquer. These hand-crafted pens are popular among collectors both in Japan and in the West.

Platinum Pens launched the first water-based ballpoint pen in 1948 and began to manufacture fountain pens that used ink cartridges in 1958. In 1978 they introduced the model 3776 fountain pen, named after the height of Mount Fuji, which is 3776 meters tall.

The Platinum Pen Company combines high quality materials with traditional Japanese artistic craftsmanship. Their pens range in style from amazing works of art, to the flagship Platinum President fountain pen which balances the best in fine writing with an every day practicality, to the perky and popular Preppy fountain pens that are affordable for almost anyone.

New to the Writer's Bloc store is a selection of [Platinum Pens](#) from the flagship President Series and the 3776 Series. If you're craving a high quality extra-fine nib these are definitely worth a try since the size of Japanese-made nibs runs on the fine side. A fine Japanese nib is most often comparable to an extra-fine European-made nib. For those that like a nib that writes as "smooth as silk" with good ink flow and nice variation in stroke width then you may enjoy [Platinum's extraordinary music nib](#).

Posted by Cheryl at 08:35 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



July 07, 2009

Tips To Improve Ink Flow a Dry Writing Fountain Pen

Here are some suggestions that might help to improve the performance of a dry fountain pen or to get the ink flowing in a new fountain pen that doesn't want to start:

1) Sometimes [fountain pens](#) will come from the manufacturer with an oily film on the feed or the nib. Or, perhaps there is some dried ink or sediment blocking the pen's feed. To make sure this isn't a problem it would be good to try and safely clean the pens. Here are some suggestions on how to do this:

http://blog.shopwritersbloc.com/fountain_pens/fountain_pen_cleaning_solution.html

2) If you think the problem could be dried ink residue and a good soaking in a cleaning solution doesn't help, taking it to a fountain pen dealer for an ultrasound cleaning may help.

3) Be sure that the ink cartridge is firmly attached to the pen. Once in awhile we find some writers haven't pushed hard enough to puncture the ink cartridge to start the flow of ink.

4) Temporarily store the pen with the nib pointing downwards to encourage the feed to fill with ink. Then try it again after waiting for awhile.

5) Dipping the nib in water for several seconds can also encourage the flow of ink.

6) Add a drop of water to the ink in the cartridge or the converter. Sometimes this helps.

7) Experiment with different types of ink. Noodler's Ink suggests giving their [Eel Ink](#) a try.

8) [InkSafe ink additive](#) from Tryphon Enterprises is known to be helpful. One of its purposes is to improve ink flow in dry-writing pens. We haven't tried it ourselves yet.

9) If you are using a converter you could try using cartridges or a different brand of converter instead. Sometimes the ink sticks to the sides of the converter and this causes ink flow problems.

10) If the above suggestions do not help, it might be worth it to send your pen in for professional fountain pen repair. Having the nib adjusted (tines realigned, slit widened or narrowed etc) or having the nib replaced could solve the problem. Use caution if trying this yourself because you could damage your pen!

We hope this helps. Does anyone else have some tips they would like to share? We welcome your comments!

Posted by Cheryl at 08:01 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



June 09, 2009

Is it really cheaper to use bottled ink?



We found a very interesting comparison regarding the cost of using bottled ink vs. the cost of using ink cartridges tucked inside a [Noodler's Ink](#) box and wanted to share this helpful information with you.

According to research done by Noodler's a 4.5 oz bottle of their ink has the amount of ink equal to \$72.94 worth of the least costly retail ink cartridges in the world. When you consider that in June 2009 Writer's Bloc sells [Noodler's 4.5 oz bottles](#) for between \$17.50 and \$19.00, this is around a \$55.44 savings over using even the cheapest cartridges! In addition, Noodler's Ink has a reputation for being good quality, is safe for all fountain pens and comes in a wide range of colors, which is something you might not get using those cheap cartridges.

Quotes obtained by Noodler's Ink in January 2009 reveal that the ink in cartridges from some European, Japanese and North American companies sells for \$148.00 per 4.5 oz and even well over \$315.00 per 4.5 oz of ink. That is some outrageously expensive ink!

Using bottled ink when you can just makes sense - it is easier on the environment and it is by far a much better deal than ink cartridges!

Posted by Cheryl at 08:30 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



May 12, 2009

Is it safe to take a fountain pen on an airplane?



Fountain pen users love to travel just as much as everyone else, so why not travel with your fountain pen even when you fly! There is the possibility that a fountain pen will leak in-flight when the air pressure in the plane cabin drops and the higher air pressure inside the pen forces ink out of the nib. However, there are some simple steps that can be taken to reduce or eliminate this risk.

First of all, it can help to travel with your fountain pen either completely full of ink (the air expands, not the ink) or completely empty (no ink, no leaks). Using cartridges with your pen is practical because you can travel with a new cartridge and an empty pen and insert the cartridge after you land.

It is best if you bring your fountain pens in your carry-on baggage instead of putting them inside your checked bags. For extra safety, put them inside ziploc bags and store them with the nib pointing up.

I've flown with both [LAMY](#) and [Preppy](#) fountain pens with varying amounts of ink in the cartridges and not had any problems other than a tiny bit of extra ink appearing on the LAMY nib. Alan has flown with a [Kaweco Sport](#) fountain

pen containing a full cartridge as well as LAMY pens with only partially full cartridges and not had any leaks. The only problem Alan has encountered was with an [eyedropper fill Kaweco pen](#) that was not completely full of ink. This pen leaked small beads of ink during the flight. Do any of you have a flying with fountain pen experience that you would like to share with us?

Posted by Cheryl at 11:19 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



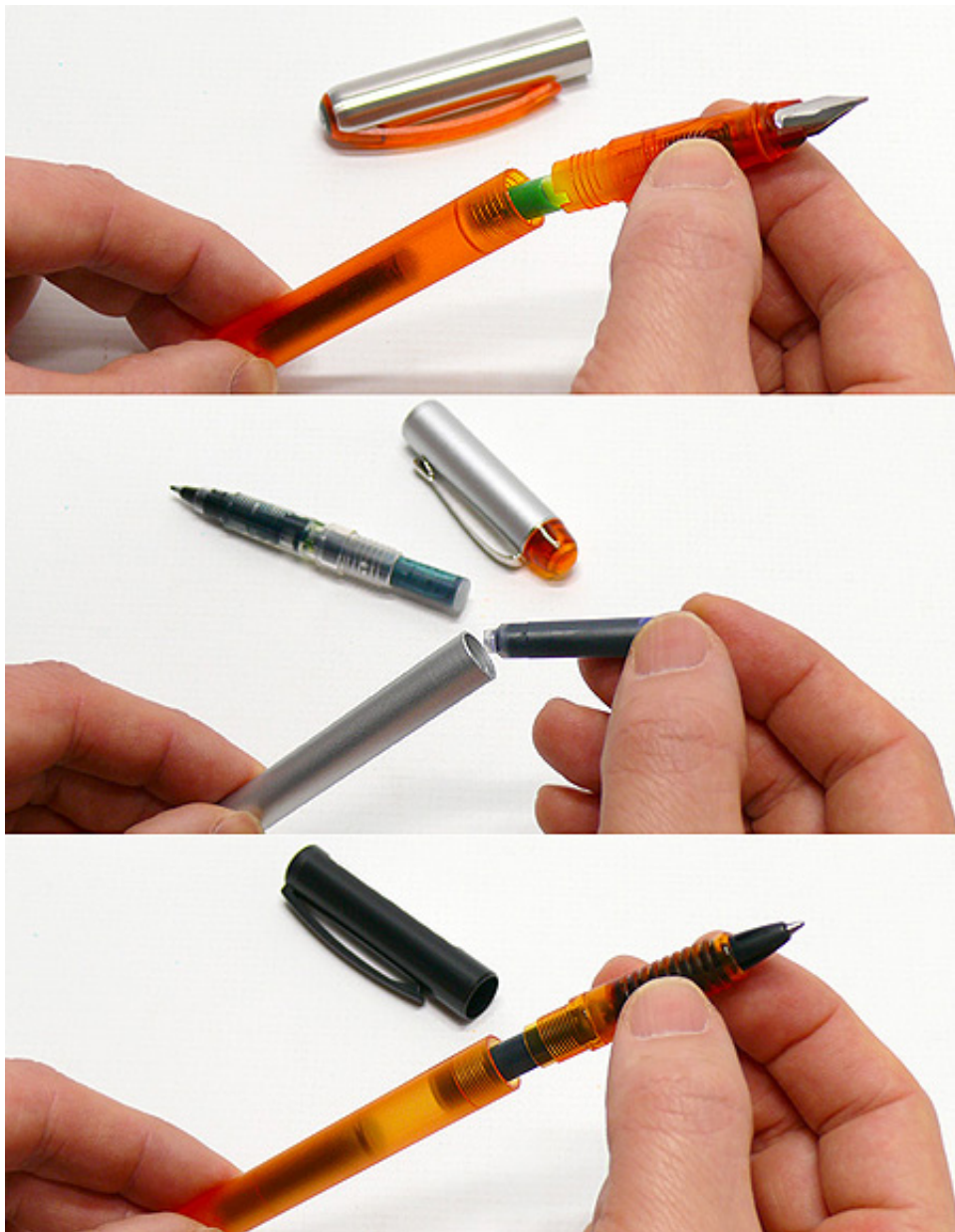
February 24, 2009

Pelikano Pen Cartridge Tips

Occasionally we hear from some of you that [short universal ink cartridges](#) come loose inside your [Pelikano rollerball](#) or [Pelikano fountain pens](#). There is an easy solution, and it is to place 2 universal cartridges in the pen barrel instead of just one. The trick is that the extra cartridge that is not attached to the feed or main part of the pen needs to be placed in the barrel "upside down", or in other words with the narrow end pointing away from the nib. This extra cartridge prevents the cartridge that is attached to the pen from coming off. You can rinse the ink out of a used universal cartridge and use this for the extra cartridge, or you can use a new full ink cartridge and this way you'll have spare ink in case you need it.

Another solution is to use [Pelikan 4001 Giant Ink Cartridges](#) or [Pelikan GRP/5 Roller Pen Ink Cartridges](#) since their much longer size helps to keep them in place.

This trick can also be used with [J. Herbin's refillable rollerball pens](#). Hope this helps!



Posted by Cheryl at 08:30 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



February 17, 2009

Drawing with Noodler's Nightshade Fountain Pen Ink

I've been wanting to try drawing with a very dark brown fountain pen ink and decided to choose [Noodler's Ink Nightshade](#) as my first experiment. In the barrel of my eyedropper fill [Preppy Fountain Pen](#) this ink actually looks like a very dark purple, but on the white paper in my [Clairefontaine Drawing Pad](#) it looks more like a brown-black. I found that I had to slow down my sketching a bit with the fine nib of the Preppy Pen and the flow rate of the Nightshade, but overall I am quite satisfied with the results. What do you think? What are your favorite fountain pen inks to use for sketching?



From [Drawing with Fountain Pen Ink](#)

Posted by Cheryl at 08:46 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



January 27, 2009

Fountain Pen Cleaning Solution

Most of the time, room temperature water is sufficient for cleaning a fountain pen. However, if your pen has a lot of dried ink in it or you want to change your ink color or ink brand, a good soaking in a cleaning solution can help. This recipe was created by an experienced fountain pen user. **A word of caution:** we do not recommend using this formula with old or vintage fountain pens because ammonia or even water can cause damage to them. This solution should be safe for most modern fountain pens, but again, please use caution if your pen is made from some specialty material.

Here's a formula for a fountain pen cleaning solution that you can make at home:

1 part household ammonia (no stronger than a 10% ammonia solution)

2 parts water

Drop or 2 of mild dish detergent such as Dawn or Joy

Store the solution in a wide-mouthed glass jar large enough to immerse the parts of a pen.

Take apart your fountain pen and soak the feed and nib in the cleaning solution for several hours. Most of the time it is not necessary to soak the barrel or the cap. Remove the feed and nib from the cleaning solution and rinse with room temperature tap water until water runs clear. Blot with a clean, lint-free cloth and allow to dry overnight.

This solution can be used several times. It is a bit smelly! Follow all warnings on the household ammonia container and do not mix with chlorine bleach.

Others have had success soaking & cleaning fountain pen feeds and nibs in household ammonia straight from the bottle. They warn that before doing this be sure that the household ammonia has **no more than 10%** ammonia in the solution! A stronger solution may damage your pens.



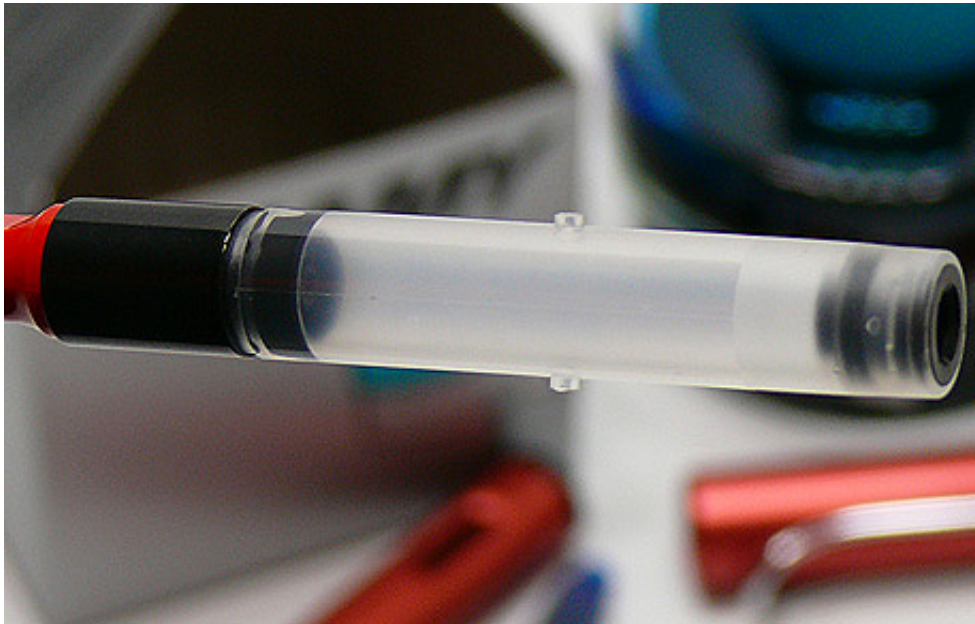
Posted by Cheryl at 09:10 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



December 30, 2008

How to Install a LAMY Converter

The **LAMY converter** has been carefully designed to help it stay securely attached to your **LAMY fountain pen**. When used correctly, this can help prevent accidents from leaking ink.



LAMY converter - notice the 2 small plastic nubs in this picture - one pointing up and the other pointing down.



The converter can fit in the pen with the nubs facing this way, but this does not help to secure the converter.



The nubs are designed to fit into these slots on the main part of the pen. This helps to keep the converter securely in place.



LAMY pen with converter securely in place.

Posted by Cheryl at 09:15 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(10\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



December 23, 2008

When Should You Refill Your Eyedropper Pen?



Here's a handy tip from [Noodler's Ink](#) about when to refill your [eyedropper pens](#):

Eyedropper pens "should be refilled when 2/3rds empty as more than 2/3 air in the chamber can cause expansion/excess flow from the heat of your hand."

We also found it helpful when refilling our eyedropper pens to leave the ink level in the barrel about 1/4" lower than where the end of the main part of the pen will be when it is screwed together. This will help you to avoid

some of the mess when refilling.

Posted by Cheryl at 12:00 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



December 16, 2008

Should You Use an O-Ring to Convert Your Fountain Pen to an Eyedropper?

There are many opinions as to whether or not you need to use an **O-ring** with your fountain pen to **convert it to eyedropper fill**, so we thought we would share our observations with you.

The main advantage of using an O-ring is that it helps to prevent cracking of the pen barrel. When silicone grease is applied to the threads of the pen barrel to prevent ink from leaking, it is easy to use too much force when screwing the pen back together and this can lead to cracks. The O-ring cushions the barrel, but please do not tighten the pen too much or the O-ring can bulge out!

The disadvantages of O-rings are that they usually are sold in packages containing hundreds of O-rings and it can be difficult to choose the right size of O-ring for each different size of pen. Also, an O-ring alone is not enough to safely convert a fountain pen into an eyedropper fill pen.

We have found that **silicone grease** is essential to convert your pen into an eyedropper pen, and it will work as a good seal even without an O-ring. For over one year now we have been using one eyedropper pen with silicone grease alone and no O-ring and it has worked just fine without leaking.

The trick is that you need to refresh the silicone grease on your pen every time you refill it with ink. Be sure to coat both sets of threads (on the end of barrel and on the main section of the pen) with a generous amount of silicone grease. When tightening the barrel to the pen after you refill it with ink, avoid using too much force so that you will not break the pen. Wipe off any excess silicone grease. This is a simple, cheap method to convert a fountain pen into an eyedropper pen.

One of our favorite fountain pens that can be converted into an eyedropper fill pen is the **Kaweco Sport**. The threads of this pen are very close together and it has a generous smooth area below the threads to help give it a good seal when used with silicone grease. Additionally, this creates a large ink reservoir so you can write for a much longer period of time than when you use a standard universal fountain pen cartridge. Do you have any experiences with eyedropper fill pens? If so, we'd love to hear from you!



Without silicone grease, ink seeps past the threads and leaks out of the pen. -- **Need O-ring?**



Using a generous amount of silicone grease on the threads gives a good seal to your eyedropper pen.



Don't use too much force to put your pen back together and then wipe off excess silicone grease.



Ink does not seep past the threads or leak from the eyedropper pen sealed with silicone grease.

Posted by Cheryl at 02:23 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



December 02, 2008

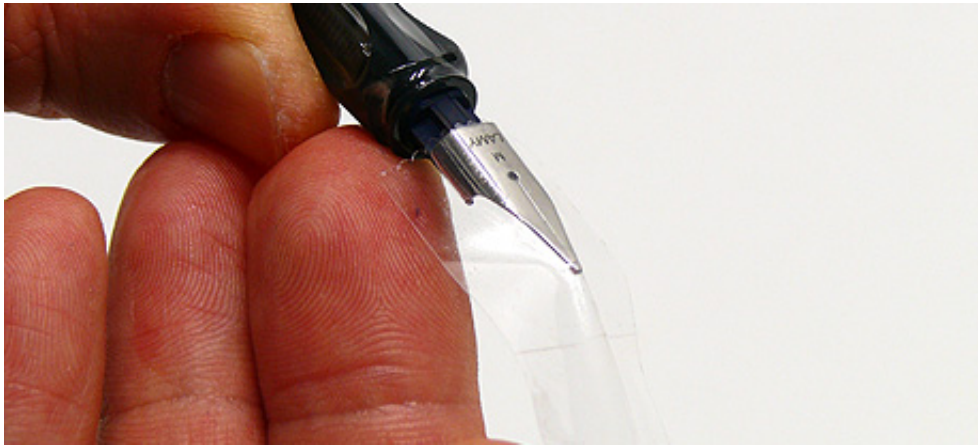
How to Replace the Nib on a LAMY Fountain Pen

If your LAMY fountain pen nib gets damaged, or if you just want to use a different kind of nib for writing such as a fine nib instead of a medium nib, it is nice to know that [LAMY fountain pen nibs](#) are easily replaced.

First, wipe off any ink from your fountain pen nib. Next, starting at the edge of the ink feed and working your way down to the end of the nib, firmly adhere a few inches of clear, plastic tape to the front of the nib. Be sure to make the piece of tape long enough so that you will be able to pull on the end of the tape. Do not use magic tape, as this will tear too easily. Transparent tape for general office use or packing tape should work. Then, pull the tape slightly down and away from the pen and the nib should slide off of your fountain pen.

To put on the new nib, just line it up with the ink feed and push it on firmly. This method is commonly used by LAMY fountain pen users and will not scratch or damage the nib. Easy!







Posted by Cheryl at 09:17 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(6\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



November 25, 2008

Left-Handed Fountain Pen Use - Part 3



My continuing experimentation with fountain pens has recently included the [Kaweco Sport Classic Fountain Pen](#) with a medium nib and [Noodler's Ink](#), as well as the [Pelikan Pelikano Left-Handed Fountain Pen](#) with a medium nib and [J. Herbin Ink](#). I found that both of these pens worked equally well for a Lefty and their qualities were very similar.

The first thing I wondered about was whether or not I would notice a difference using the specially designed nib on the left-handed Pelikano. This nib has a more rounded shape than a regular nib to accommodate the angle of left-handed writing. As an "overwriter" I, personally, only noticed a small difference in performance using this nib. It performed well, as did the Kaweco Sport, and both wrote in a medium line of similar width.

I appreciated the compact size of the Kaweco Sport Fountain Pen. With its cap safely screwed on it is only 4" long and is great for carrying in a purse or pocket. I wasn't worried that the cap would come off and stain the leather on my Fossil bag with ink!



I did find that I preferred the grip of the Left-Handed Pelikano to the grip of the Kaweco. The grip on the Pelikano is rotated slightly for the left hand, and it worked well with my very strange pen grip. You Lefties out there know what I mean.... One strike against the Pelikano is that the first Pelikano Fountain Pen that I bought was defective and I had to exchange it. The second pen did work much better, and there were no problems with the Kaweco.

The Noodler's Ink seemed to have a more generous flow than the J. Herbin Ink, but it could be because it was a custom ink mix that included **Noodler's Firefly**. When added to other Noodler's colors, this ink seems to produce a wetter flow. So if you tend to smear your ink while writing, perhaps it would be best to stay away from Noodler's Firefly and use the J. Herbin instead.

I was satisfied with both the Kaweco Sport and the Left-Handed Pelikano, and felt that these were both practical and well functioning fountain pens for everyday use by a Lefty. However, I am in love with my **LAMY Safari** and it still tops of my list of favorite pens.

Posted by Cheryl at 12:54 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



September 16, 2008

Left-Handed Fountain Pen Use - Part 2



After my successful experiment with the Platinum Preppy, I was eagerly anticipating taking my new [LAMY Safari Fountain Pen](#) for a test drive and I wasn't disappointed!

Armed with my LAMY Safari and [Exacompta Club Leatherette Journal](#) I travelled to a 3 day convention ready to take lots of notes. Many, many pages later there was not one ink smear and my hand felt less fatigued than it normally does thanks to the smooth action of the LAMY nib combined with the ultra-smooth Clairefontaine paper in my journal. This combination would be an asset to anyone who does a lot of writing!

For this experiment I used [LAMY standard ink cartridges](#) in turquoise. Since I tend to poke holes in paper when I use extra-fine nib pens, I choose the LAMY fine nib for my pen. The fine nib produced a consistent flow of ink in a medium to fine line. The benefit of the LAMY Safari's ergonomic grip was lost on me because my left-handed grip is rather strange, but it was not a hindrance either. The Clairefontaine paper in the Exacompta Club Journal is 80g, a lighter weight than the usual 90g paper used in [Clairefontaine notebooks](#). Even though there was a little bit of ink bleed-thru, I was still able to write on both sides of the page with a fountain pen.

This [lime green LAMY Safari](#) quickly became my favorite pen!

(Just a note: LAMY Studio, Safari, Vista, Joy and AL-Star Fountain Pens all use the same type of stainless steel nibs.)

Posted by Cheryl at 08:28 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(6\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



July 22, 2008

Left-Handed Fountain Pen Use - Part 1



Without any personal input from other Lefties, I decided to slowly ease in to the world of fountain pens by first trying out the [Platinum Preppy Fountain Pen](#). After all, this pen is very inexpensive so what would I have to lose?

After several weeks of use around the house on random types of paper I only had one ink smearing incident. This is better than what I had hoped for! I found this pen easy to use and it provided a consistent flow of ink in a smooth, fine line. The biggest drawback for me is that none of the Preppy [ink cartridges](#) come in the colors that I love. This problem can be easily solved by using an [ink converter](#) and [bottled ink](#) instead of cartridges. Before obtaining these things I first wanted to do a "test drive" to see if it is worth it, which I think it is.

(Just a side note - although Platinum Preppy Fountain Pen ink is not waterproof, it is water resistant. Don't get any of this ink on your clothing because it is very difficult, if not impossible to get the stain out!)

As a left-handed writer I am quite satisfied with my first fountain pen experience. Consequently, I now have in my possession a fun, new, [special edition lime green LAMY Safari Fountain Pen](#). Another report will follow shortly with the test results.

Posted by Cheryl at 08:44 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(1\)](#)



July 15, 2008

Crash Course in Fountain Pen Cartridges

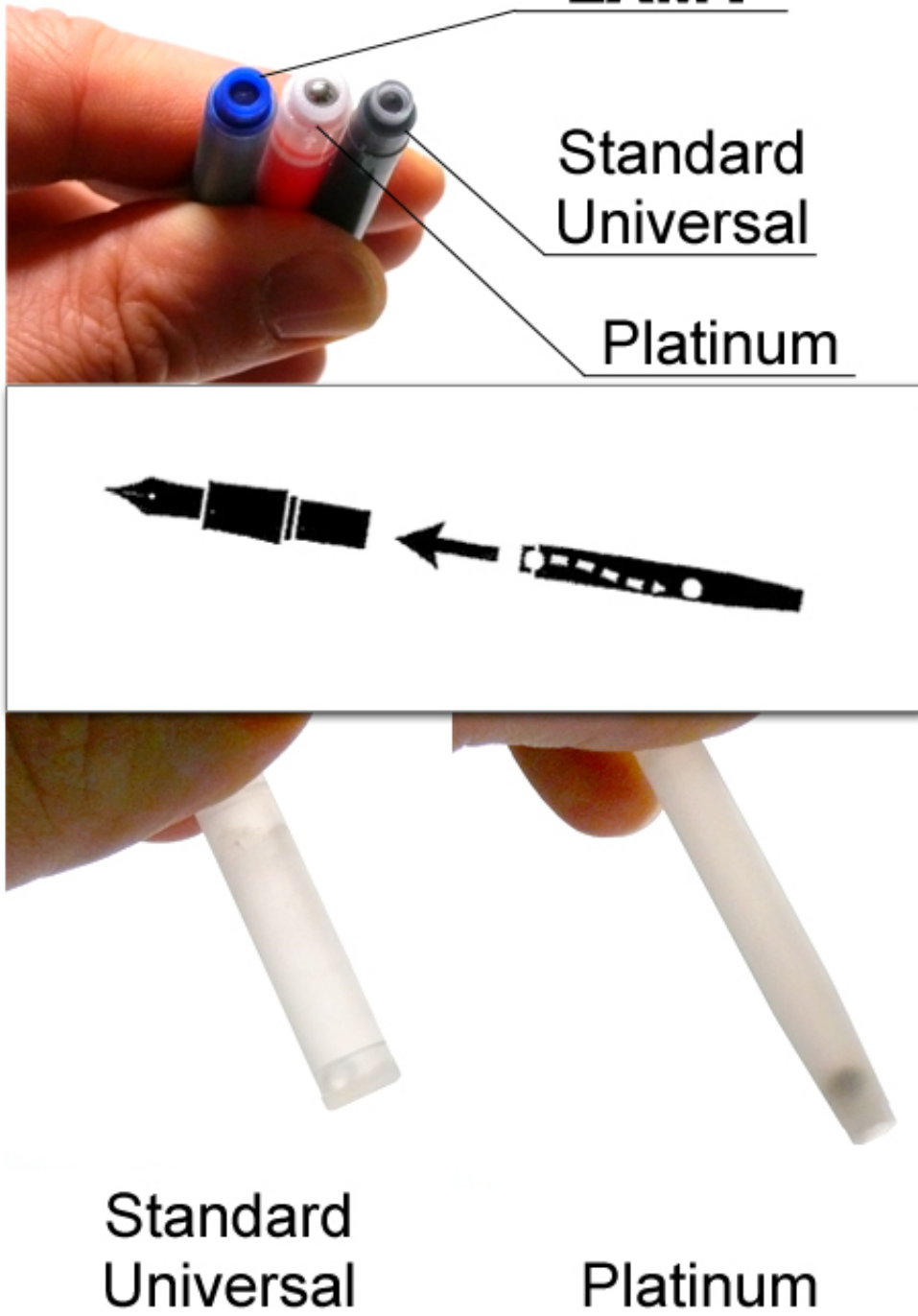
When I first got my pink [Platinum Preppy Fountain Pen](#) I was very nervous about putting the cartridge in. I didn't want to push it so hard that it ruined the pen, but I also wanted to make sure it was attached securely so the ink wouldn't leak and ruin my purse. After getting some feedback I realized that I wasn't alone in my fears, so I decided to share what I've learned about fountain pen cartridges to help others calm their fears about putting their pens together.

First of all, the tension that you feel when pushing the cartridge into the pen comes from the stopping device at the top of the cartridge, meant to keep ink in prior to assembly. In the [Platinum Preppy Fountain Pen Cartridges](#) this is a small metal ball, in standard cartridges (like [J. Herbin Universal](#)) it is a tiny glass ball, and in [LAMY cartridges](#) it's just a thin layer of plastic. When you push the cartridge in you are not only attaching it to the pen, you are pushing the stopper device in and starting the ink flow.

The way to put cartridges in is fairly simple: slowly and gently while ensuring a firm attachment. Put it in straight

on and start pushing gently. When you feel the tension from the release of the stopping device it should be just about in, and a tiny extra push to secure it won't hurt.

LAMY





Posted by Kelly at 07:26 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(6\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



June 04, 2008


Pen Modification - Convert into eyedropper fill

The **Kaweco Sport fountain pen** is brilliantly designed and reasonably priced. When it's capped, it is compact enough to fit in any purse or pocket, and when it's posted, it is the perfect size for writing. However, one downfall of the pen is that it can only be used with short standard cartridges, wasting the space 1/3 of the barrel. Also, it cannot be used with a converter so writers cannot use their favorite bottled inks with it. To resolve these issues I converted the Kaweco Sport fountain pen into an eyedropper fill system, where the barrel is used as the ink reservoir. To prevent

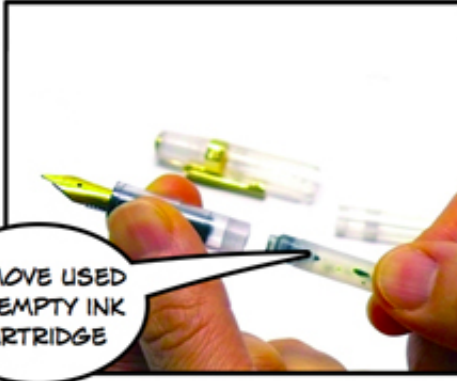

ink leakage I used 100% silicone grease (petroleum free) to seal the threads. Hopefully, this explanation will help other writers maximize their Kaweco's potential.

Pen Mods


Vol.1



CONVERT ALAN'S KAWECO CLASSIC INTO AN EYEDROPPER FILL PEN




REMOVE USED OR EMPTY INK CARTRIDGE




SEAL THIS SECTION NICELY WITH...


THIS




100% Silicone Grease

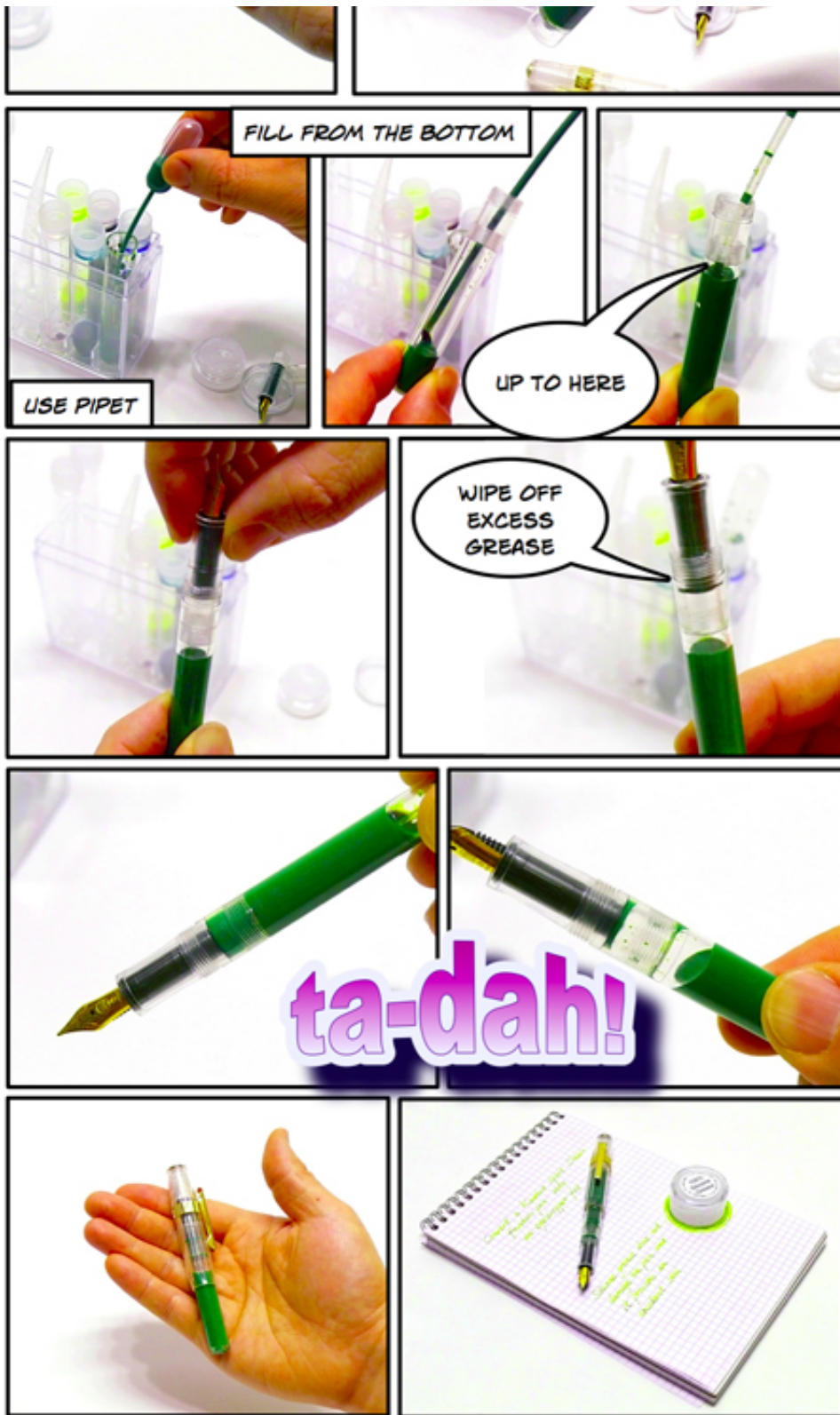


COAT WITH SILICONE GREASE



ALAN'S INK MIX: NOODLER'S FIREFLY + FEW DROPS OF NOODLER'S HEART OF DARKNESS





Posted by Alan at 05:20 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(12\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(1\)](#)



May 20, 2008

Can a Left-Handed Writer Use a Fountain Pen?



The [rainbow of ink colors](#) available to fountain pen users has been tempting me for sometime to buy a fountain pen. Lime green and orange are my favorite colors and it would be a treat to have a fabulous, smooth-writing pen filled with these vibrant shades. I've heard it said that fountain pens are not for lefties, but the [Classic Fountain Pens, Inc](#) website gives me hope.

Now I must figure out what pen will work for me. The Classic Fountain Pens website says I am an "overwriter" which means that I am at risk of smearing ink and could end up with a very colorful palm if I don't get the right nib/ink/paper combination. I've heard that the best nib for a lefty should not be too fine or too broad, the type of ink must dry quickly and the paper must not have a finish that prevents ink from drying quickly.

Are there any left-handed fountain pen users out there that can come to my rescue? What do you use that works? What are your favorite pens, nibs, inks and paper? I'd love to hear from you!!

Posted by Cheryl at 12:18 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)



May 06, 2008

The Family of Fountain Pens

If I were a fountain pen I would be a Platinum Preppy pen, young, colorful, and fun. If I went to a family reunion-- yes, a fountain pen family reunion-- who would I see? Pens like the Pelikan [Souveran M400](#) and [M405](#) are dignified, experienced, and always classy; like a beloved grandfather or a smart uncle. LAMY pens are equally as cool, but on a different level. LAMY pens like the [Safari](#) and [Studio](#), would be my ultra-hip, and totally dependable, cousins that I aspired to be like one day.

Perhaps comparing fountain pens to family is a bit of a stretch. However, when you find a fountain pen you really love and want to use all the time, it becomes like an extension of yourself. This entry will consider some characteristics of the brands Pelikan and LAMY, and hopefully after reading it you will have a better idea of which pens are right for you.



Pelikan

Pelikan released its first fountain pen in Germany in 1929, and introduced a revolution in writing: the piston-fill ink system. These pens could hold more ink and write in a smoother, more precise line than any of their competitors. The name Pelikan quickly gained a reputation for meticulous design and brilliant functionality, characteristics that the brand still embodies today. Each Pelikan nib is masterfully handcrafted with steel or gold; the Pelikan symbol and designs can vary between nibs, but each one truly is a work of art. Gold nibs are, of course, softer and will therefore deliver a smoother line, but their steel counterparts also deliver a deep, wet line with little effort. The design of the pen itself has not strayed far from the first pen in 1929. Clean lines and bold, but subtle, colors are hard to improve on, so this classic look has remained with the pen. However, more adventurous pens, including my favorite the Pelikan **Souveran M320**, are showing off brighter colors and a gorgeous marbled look. Most of the pens in the Pelikan Souveran line still have the extremely helpful ink window and boast the distinctive pelican pocket clip.

While the fountain pen hasn't changed much in almost 80 years, the company has. Pelikan now also designs and manufactures other fine writing instruments, like rollerball pens and fineliners, and well as supplies for everyone from kindergarden to college. For now Writer's Bloc only carries fountain pens, but if you want to see some of their other stuff visit their website [Pelikan Home](#).

Pelikan fountain pens are able to remain classic because their design is timeless and their functionality is unquestionable. They are an investment, yes, but if treated with care and love one of these pens could last centuries, and still look cool.



LAMY

LAMY pens are the product of creative minds spurred on by the drive towards increasingly contemporary design. This German company released its first pen, the LAMY **2000**, in 1966 and it has remained a favorite of fountain pen users ever since. At that time this pen's design was unique, it was the first time a pen clip had been made entirely of stainless steel. This was the first step toward many design innovations.

In 1980 the **Safari** was released. Young students were immediately attracted to the bold, vibrant colors, sleek plastic body, comfortable triangular grip, and uber-cool clip. Even the nib was new and different, it's black! This design was made even more modern with the aluminum **AL-Star**, which now comes in a range of great metallic colors. My favorite LAMY pen is the **Studio** pen. The brushed metal and unique clip makes the pen a small piece of modern art, not to mention it also writes incredibly well. Most of the pens use a **cartridge** ink system, but all can be used with a **converter**. Both are easily manageable and hold a lot of ink. LAMY pens have won awards in design, and rightfully so. Check out their other products at their website [LAMY-Products](#).

LAMY fountain pens are great for smart, modern students and business people. They are affordable, high-quality pens that boast contemporary design, but tried and true writing mechanisms.

In a nutshell: Pelikan=Classic and LAMY=Contemporary and both brands produce awesome fountain pens. It's just a matter of finding the right fit for you. Question: if you were a fountain pen, what would you be? Post your answer, questions, and comments below!

Posted by Kelly at 12:09 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)

