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Friday, 06/09/06

Know Your Stuff: Glass items often reflect the time they were made

By CONNIE SUE DAVENPORT
For Williamson A.M.

Typical of the various glass items I find in the homes of my private clients in Williamson County each week, these pieces reflect the decades of their creation and use.

The oldest and finest piece of glass is the pale pink bud vase shown in the accompanying photo. I searched for a mark but found nothing to indicate the maker.



The elegant pink bud vase, right, is the oldest and most valuable item in this collection. The orange vase and giant blue brandy snifter were made for looks, not function.

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The majority of glass is unmarked — even many of the finer pieces. There may have been a paper label that has since washed or worn away. This vase has crisp, angular edges tapering to the top. The pontil mark (the area on the base where the molten glass was attached to the glassblower's pipe) is highly polished and invisible. The color is constant throughout the vase and the glass clear as clean water. A skilled craftsperson in a well-equipped studio made the piece. His intent was to produce a piece of functional art to delight the eye and catch the light. I would date the vase around 1910 because of the clean lines, color and fine polished finish. In a good shop

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this would be priced at \$110.

The purple-and-white candy compote in the other photograph has an acid puffed mark Czechoslovakia. This dates the piece after 1891 and before 1914 based on the United States' import rules. Items made to sell in the U.S. after 1891 were required to be marked with the country of origin. After 1914 the words "made in" were required as well. The glass isn't as clear as the bud vase, and this piece was obviously made as something pretty for the masses — not as an object of art like the vase. Even with the mark, this purple compote's value is \$35.

The tall orange vase and the large blue glass compote in the first photo are typical of the early 1960s. They have the popular colors of the day and remind me of Samantha's house on TV's "Bewitched." The orange vase was never used to display flowers and the giant blue brandy snifter on a stand was equally functionless. These are simply "pretties" in the proper color. These colors are again popular and the '60s are the new vintage to collect. In a trendy shop the vase would bring \$45 and the blue compote \$95.

And the striated-color, freeform vase in the second photo is a modern (after 1980) glass import that I see in every antique mall I visit. These have come into the U.S. through importers in the past 25 years and now trickle into the secondary market. They are accompanied by similar glass colors shaped like a swan. Vases and swans sell for \$12.



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In photo above, the purple-and-white candy dish, left, was made in Czechoslovakia between 1891 and 1914. The free-form vase, right, is a more contemporary import. (SUBMITTED)

Contact Connie Sue Davenport with any questions about your antiques and collectibles, and we'll discuss them here. Send to conniesue@conniesueinc.com or by mail in care of Williamson A.M.

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