



Kevin Milaeger

Milaeger's

The Charm of Beaded Glass Ornaments from Czechoslovakia

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After collecting Christmas ornaments for many years, I've come to appreciate beaded glass ornaments more and more. They have a subtle beauty and charm that traditional glass ornaments lack. The techniques used in their creation are unique and were developed mostly in Czechoslovakia. Or, if you want to go back when



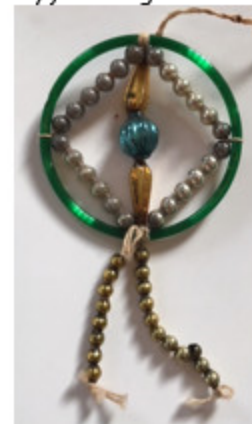
the ornaments were first made, Bohemia. Now, with political changes, it is known as the Czech Republic, as the ornaments are made mostly in the western part of the now divided Czechoslovakia.

I'll have to admit that about thirty years ago, when I first became aware of beaded ornaments, I was dismissive. My sister Kris explained why they were special, with their tiny colored glass beads strung together in intricate ways. But to me they just didn't match up to the larger, traditional glass ornaments that we are all familiar with. Now, the beaded ornaments are my principle focus, at least as far as new acquisitions for my personal collection goes.



These glass ornaments are made of colored glass beads (some very tiny) strung together on thin wires. Oftentimes, thin glass rods are added to

compliment the beads, allowing for more creativity and design possibilities. These strings of glass beads are then fashioned into various shapes. Some are abstract designs, and others are representational, such as a star, butterfly, bicycle, and so on. We buy most of them from collectors in the Czech Republic, and also from Russia. After World War II, Japanese ornament makers created their design versions of the beaded ornaments, and those we sometimes buy from American collectors. I don't think there are any that come directly from Japan anymore, as they were all made for the export market, so they were all shipped here in the 1950's.



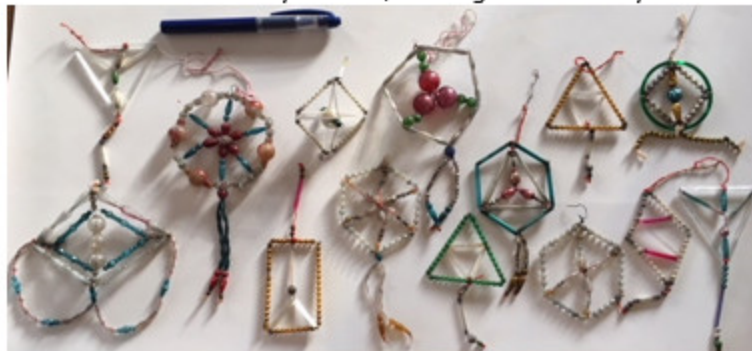
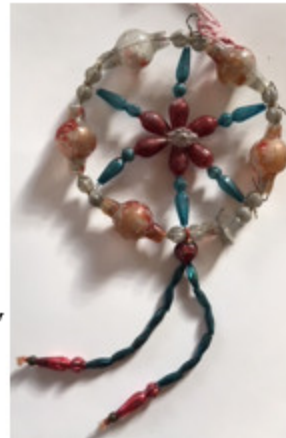
We at Milaeger's try to offer ornaments at reasonable prices. We have not offered any of the more elaborate ornaments, such as bicycles. Those



would have to sell for a minimum of \$35 each, some much higher. But really, some of these complex designs are not quite what you would imagine. I've seen a few airplanes, for example, that look as if they crash landed. Still, we have a nice selection of these treasures. Of course, being old they are sometimes less than perfect----a bead may be cracked or missing, and sometimes there is a little fading, but even the faded colors have their own distinct charm. In the current Czech Republic, some craftsmen still make these

fascinating ornaments. I have a few newer ones in my personal collection, but I believe all of those we are offering in our store are pre-WWII.

One interesting thing about these beaded ornaments is that most of them do not look all that "Christmassy." That is, you rarely see a Santa Claus, or an angel, or a snowman, for example, so their potential season of use is much greater than other glass ornaments. Some collectors display them year 'round, and of course they don't have to hang on a Christmas tree. At my house, I hang them in my kitchen from light fixtures



that are mounted under my kitchen cabinets. When those lights are on, the ornaments really shine---no matter when I chose to display them.

Please [email me](mailto:info@milaegers.com) if you have any questions or comments. If you are interested in purchasing ornaments pictured in this blog, please contact Rosemary, who handles mail order sales, at 262.693.2040 x101 or info@milaegers.com.