



Milaeger's

Vintage Ornaments---marvelous bibelots

Kevin Milaeger

We continue to add to the collection of old Christmas ornaments we are offering at Milaeger's this year. We acquire them from Christmas dealers from around the country, and even a few from Canada and Europe.

Recently we received an ornament shipment from Luxembourg (the country in Europe, not Luxembourg, Wisconsin.) Most of the ornaments in that shipment have a very unique type of cap---a type that I have seen before, but I had forgotten about so I didn't mention it in my last blog. The top of the ornament (the part that the cap fits



over) is known as the "pike." In the case of the ornaments from Luxembourg (I am not sure where they were actually made), the opening of the pike is bridged by a slender strand of glass, presumably added after the ornament was completed. The bottom loop on the metal ornament hook is then slipped around the strand of glass. Needless to say, this is a very fragile method for ornament support. It is amazing that they have survived intact for all these years, and I am sure that most did not. The price reflects the rarity. (Note the strands of copper that the original owner fashioned into hooks.)

We have acquired a number of interesting ornaments that are known as "dioramas." These are all glass ornaments (although plastic versions do exist) and they are all from the post WW2 era. Most were made in Japan, and we think everything we currently have was made there. These globular ornaments are





about 2.5" wide, and come in all colors. On one side of the ornament the glass is concave, and in that indentation, a little "diorama scene" has been created. Sometimes it is a single figure such as Santa Claus, a reindeer, church, angel, snowman or other subject. Sometimes it is a

miniature scene, with perhaps a house or church, trees, snow and occasionally a figure. The backgrounds come in various colors, creating different effects. We wouldn't go so far as to call these ornaments "rare," but they are definitely hard to come by. When placed on the tree, we like to situate them behind a tree light so that the subject is highlighted.

Another interesting type of ornament is the so called "nipple" ornament. No, this is not a name I coined---it is used commonly by collectors, and I assume it was in usage before the age of political correctness. The ornaments in this photo are about 3.5-4" long, but we have seen them both larger and smaller. Some have "indents" on the upper part of the ornament. The number of indents determines the price, along with ornament size, the quality of the color, and the overall condition.



Since we acquire these vintage ornaments from so many different dealers, our costs can vary widely. As a result, you may find an identical (or very similar) ornament selling in our stores for two different prices. We try to be as consistent as possible, but since the antique ornament market fluctuates as it does, the retail price may also vary. It's a bit like shopping at an antique mall and finding the identical item in two different booths, for two different prices.

One more thing about ornament caps and hooks---I thought you might like to see some old ornament hook boxes. These are from my personal collection and are not for sale---I just thought you might find them interesting. But, we do have some old ornament boxes for you. These vary in age and condition, and we are offering them to our customers for free---one box for every five vintage ornaments, purchased at the same time, while they last. We'll have an assortment of these at each store.





This photo shows a sampling of the boxes.

Please feel free to [email](#) me with any questions or comments.