



*Milaeger's*

## Squinting at the Christmas Tree

Kevin Milaeger

**As a kid,** I liked to spend December evenings under the Christmas tree...directly under the tree. I'd lay on my back and look up into the tree, at all the different colored ornaments. The tree I have now has a revolving stand, so all the ornaments can be seen from a chair. (But even now, I still get down on the floor at least once every Christmas for a different view.) Since every ornament on



my tree is different, the view from the chair seems almost ever changing. I liken it to a mesmerizing fireplace or fire pit. You can take your eyes off it, but it always pulls you back in. To enhance the experience, I like to



squint at the tree. This changes the look considerably, because the lights shimmer when I squint....with the revolving tree stand, it is almost like a kaleidoscope. I can get a similar sensation by just taking off my glasses. In the resulting blur, the ornaments lose their shapes; just the color and the lights are apparent. It was when I was doing this some years ago that I realized that I had a

preponderance of pink ornaments on the tree. I guess this was because there are a lot of pink ornaments available, and many of the older red ornaments are often faded. Although I liked the look of the tree, I decided that I wanted a greater variety of color. So I began looking for other colors in earnest, every year adding a number of these, replacing some of the

lesser quality pink ornaments. Green, gold, and blue ornaments are easy to find and helped the tree, but the introduction of purple, violet, aqua, copper, lime, chartreuse, and other colors really made my tree much more enjoyable. (All the ornaments on my tree are vintage, so it's not just a matter of buying them off the shelf---it takes time to find them.) Years of this color evolution have resulted in a much more interesting tree. I encourage you to squint at your tree, and see what you find.



Another gradual change in my tree has been the increased percentage of transparent ornaments. I don't mean clear ornaments---I am talking about colored glass. Because you can see through the colored glass, you are able to see lights so the tree appears brighter. You can also see other ornaments, and even all the way through the tree. Since the ornaments are all glass, the ornament exterior reflects light, even though there is no silvering on the inside of the ornament. So, with these "unsilvered" ornaments, which come in many shapes and colors, you get both reflection and color. But because you can see through them, the tree has a lighter appearance, and added depth.



Recently, I was chatting with a customer who was shopping our vintage ornament tree at Milaeger's, and she said "This tree reminds me of my grandma." The cockles of my heart were warmed, literally. It seems almost every customer I talk to has some memory of at least a few of our vintage ornaments---a faded recollection of past Christmases, now

revived. At Milaeger's we like to be part of that experience, making your Christmas season merrier!