



Kevin Milaeger

Milaeger's

Fanciful Bird Ornaments

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Glass bird ornaments have broad appeal. Whenever we offer them, we get a big response from a wide range of enthusiasts. There seems to be an endless array of designs. Very few of the old ones depict real birds, at least not North American birds that we are familiar with. Modern day ornament makers strive for more accuracy, and many of the new birds are identifiable.

The county of origin of vintage glass birds is not easy. The birds often have a clamp that is used to fasten them to the tree.

Sometimes there is a stamp on the clamp, indicating country of origin. But that is the exception, not the rule. If you are lucky, you may find one with an old paper label, but probably not even 1% of them have retained the label. According to the reference books, most were made in



larger birds 1



larger birds 2

West Germany, Austria, or Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic.) Some of today's largest ornament companies, such as Old World, have moved production China. They do a pretty nice job.

Some of the bigger birds are perhaps a bit more dramatic, because of their long, swan-like necks. But their resemblance to swans stops there. There are often several colors on these birds. And some have little

"horns" on their heads, kind of like what peacocks have. But the overall coloring is all wrong for peacocks. After all, these are painted with whatever colors the ornament artist chose. I imagine many of them never traveled much, and probably didn't have many books, so they let their imaginations go. And I'm glad they did. On two of our bird ornaments, the designers went a step further and added an indent



in the side of the bird's body.
Extra dazzle always works.



medium birds

Early on, ornament makers decided on "spun glass" for the tails of many birds. This was glued in place. Glue deteriorates over time. If you have any old birds on your tree, I'm guessing at least one of them has no tail. The glue fails, and the tail goes missing. Fortunately, we were able to find some old tails, so we have replaced them on any that were missing.

I mentioned that most of the birds have a metal clamp for putting them on the tree. Some of these no longer function, so you will have to figure out a way to attach them, maybe with a wire? Or you can just put them in glass or reflective bowls. That's a good look. I know one collector who attaches the birds to a glass cake stand, and in the center has a few birds whose clamp has failed. That looks good, too. I have collected the birds that need work on their clamp in one



smaller birds

photo, so you know what you are getting. Of course, some of the birds have no clips at all. Those are meant to hang below a branch with a hook or maybe string. We have a few of those too.

Show and Tell from my collection (not for sale). On the right is an unusual ornament from Czechoslovakia. It is made with tubular glass, which is common in Czech ornaments. Part of the



**Kevin's
show and tell**

birdcage is made of something resembling chenille, as is the bird on the perch. The second ornament is a glass cage, with the enclosure and the bird itself painted on the glass. Country of origin unknown. The last bird is what I take to be a hummingbird (scroll down for image), because of the long beak. You can see the paper label from Czechoslovakia.



**Kevin's
show and tell**

Scroll down for more and larger images. Please [email me](#) if you have any questions or comments. If you are interested in purchasing ornaments pictured in this blog, please contact Kelly, who handles mail order sales, at 262.693.2040 x101 or info@milaegers.com.





larger birds 1



larger birds 2





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medium birds



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birds with issues



Kevin's show and tell





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