

MOSSY COMMENTS - #15

As you have undoubtedly heard, an updated Price Guide for the Heacock & Johnson book has recently been published. When we got our copy, we dashed to the computer and entered the new values into our data base. Maybe we could afford that Round-the-World cruise now! What we found was not really unexpected – the value of our collection has increased by a modest amount, but we’re still not in the same league as Donald Trump.

Since our collection ranges from the ordinary to the exotic, we looked at various pieces of it to see what was happening. Certain things stood out. The Royal Bayreuth has jumped 46% in value. There has been a increase in the value of Sowerby salts – they are up by 27%. Figural china has risen about 30% while figural glass is up 18%. Our sterling silver has gained 5%, while our silver plated ones jumped 31%. The expensive lacy salts rose only 10 %.The big gainers were the modern ones – our Summit salts rose 39% while our Guernsey salts more than doubled Previous price guides tended to dismiss these as “repros”, but now they are recognized as legitimate collectibles. We are competing with others who want glass from a certain maker rather than just a specific shape.

When all is said and done, the book value of our collection increased about 20% over the 6-year period. This is not an unwelcome trend, but if we had put the same amount in a tax-free Municipal Bond paying 5%, our money would have increased 30% over the same period. Salts are not a great place to hide your dollars if you want to get rich, but they are a fantastic investment if you want to meet wonderful people and enjoy unusual and often beautiful things.



The new price guide is the result of an effort by Ed Bowman. He consulted collectors and dealers and merged their inputs into a reasonable set of values. He is to be applauded for this – not only does it tell us what is happening to the value of our salts, but his work contributed to the reprinting of the H&J book itself. Without this source, new collectors would find it very hard to communicate with us when they find new salts to talk about. Ed deserves much credit for this effort.