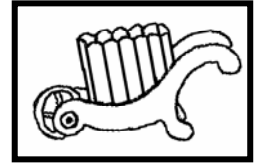


Salty Comments

Facts and Opinion about Open Salt Collecting



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Expensive and Rare

Many of us with extensive collections have acquired some special salts over the years. Sometimes they are lucky finds – the seller doesn't know what it is he is selling (and sometimes we don't either), or we find out afterwards why the salt looked a little different than what we expected. Other times the salt is well known but we want it badly enough to go beyond our budget to acquire it. In any event, once we get it home and find out about it, the salt goes on the "special ones" shelf that we point to with pride when another collector comes to call.

The words "rare" and "expensive" do not necessarily go together. We once used the criterion, "How long would it take to find one for sale" as a way to judge scarcity. We can tell you now where you can buy some of the most costly salts in the Heacock & Johnson book., but the price guide calls them "Rare". On the other hand, we have several salts where only a few copies are known, and even one that is the only one of its kind so far. In this issue we'll examine some rare and expensive salts. If you can give us any more information about them, especially the rare ones, we'd appreciate hearing from you.

The value of a salt is set by a seller's idea of its worth and a buyer's willingness to pay that amount. We've seen the same high-price salts in a dealer's stock year after year – a sure sign that they are overpriced. On the other hand, special ones that have realistic prices can usually find a home in a short time, even if the price is high. In our world, a salt selling for over \$100 rates as "Expensive". (Twenty years ago our budget stopped at \$10.00) We call one "Rare" when we know of only a few others in existence.

In the Expensive category, the first salts we think of are the Daum Nancy's. These were hand crafted, and are elaborate enough that nobody seems to have made copies. There are a variety of them, but every glass dealer seems to know about them so your chances of finding a bargain are slim. The same is true of cameo glass, like the one shown at the right. This one was made by blowing a cranberry glass bowl and applying a milk glass layer on top. This last layer was removed with a grinding wheel to leave the white design on top of the cranberry. The best of these will show shading in the design where the white layer was only partially removed. Here the skill of the maker affects the quality, which should be reflected in the price. We think it's worth the money to have one in the collection. The same goes for the Art Glass salts by Tiffany and Steuben.

	
<i>Tiffany</i>	<i>Steuben</i>
	
<i>Daum Nancy Winter Scene</i>	<i>Cameo Glass</i>

Modern art glass salts are just as attractive but sell in a lower price bracket.. Lundberg studios in California are making salts that are just as beautiful as Tiffany.. They are all signed “Lundberg”, but you need to watch for unscrupulous people who grind off the mark and scratch “L.C.T.” on the bottom. Terry Crider also made freehand salts that are similar and very attractive. His work doesn’t have non-salt collectors competing for it, so the prices are not in the “expensive” category.

For pressed glass, the biggest expense is making the mold. Once the mold is available, large quantities of any particular shape are turned out to pay for it. The expensive pressed glass salts are shapes no longer being made that are in a special color. An example is the Heisey PINEAPPLE AND FAN in emerald green. Only a few of these are known, and Heisey collectors are just as anxious to have one as we are. We don’t know why so few of them exist, but we speculate that an official of the firm wanted a set in this color and had them made specially. Their REVERE pattern salt in cobalt color falls in the same category.

As with Heisey, color makes the difference many times. Old chocolate glass is quite expensive, like the THOUSAND EYE BAND pattern. These salts are rare, and the chocolate glass collectors are as anxious as we salt collectors are to find one. The Greentown wheelbarrow often brings \$100 or more, but the NILE GREEN color is 2-3 times more expensive than any of the others.

. Old lacy glass has been expensive ever since Ruth Webb Lee wrote about it over 50 years ago. The book by Dorothy Neal and her husband which is now a bible for lacy salt collectors cemented its popularity. The most expensive of this kind are the covered salts and colors. Not all of these are hard to find, and you can see many in a good glass museum, but when a special one comes up for sale the bidding can go well over the \$1000 mark.

Finally in the glass category, we need to mention figural salts. The rare colored ones such as the Central Glass stove and the sled with a maple syrup tub on it are expensive. The Adams colored milk glass wheelbarrow with a pewter wheel and the “flying fish” are also in this category. Some figurals have been copied, however, which tends to keep the value of the originals lower.

	
<i>Lundberg National Convention Salt</i>	<i>Terry Crider Threaded Salt</i>
	
<i>Green PINEAPPLE & FAN</i>	<i>Cobalt Blue REVERE</i>
	
<i>Chocolate Glass</i>	<i>Nile Green Wheelbarrow</i>
	
<i>Chariot Lacy</i>	<i>Central Stove</i>
	
<i>Old Flying Fish</i>	<i>Maple Syrup Sled</i>
	
<i>Adams Wheelbarrow</i>	

Other than glass, when someone says “expensive”, we think Russian silver. In the days before the Russian Revolution, the silversmiths like Faberge made exquisite salts for the nobility. Although they are not really rare, the workmanship in them is outstanding, so they cannot be copied at a reasonable price. The best ones were made by soldering wire “cloissons” onto a silver base. These were filled with ground glass “enamel” which was fired to melt the glass and fill the pocket. The process was repeated several times to produce cloisonné salts that have a variety of colors on them. Modern imitations have been made using shortcuts to make the pockets on the surface and that have had only a single firing. While these can be attractive, we have yet to see one that rivals the older versions.

Beyond the Russian ones, the expensive silver tends to be old. English salts are marked with date stamps, and the ones before 1800 are costly. If you are feeling really rich, subscribe to catalog from Sotheby’s (or any other prestigious English auction house). Occasionally a set of salts from the early 1700’s or before will be offered. We have yet to feel rich enough to get into this kind of thing.

Beyond the silver area, there is one type of salt which is expensive, and rightfully so. This is Battersea enamel, made in England in the 1700’s. They are glass-based enamel fired on copper, with intricate decorations. Since copper bends easily and glass does not, the salts were easily damaged, and the survivors tend to be in less-than-perfect condition.

For china, the expensive salts tend to be figural ones. Here again, where there are people collecting the product of a special manufacturer, the value will be high. An example is Royal Bayreuth. There are books that define most of the shapes they made and quote high prices for them. Meissen is another firm whose figural salts command a high price. The situation is somewhat confused here, though, since other European factories copied not only the Meissen shapes but also the Meissen mark. We don’t profess to have a clear picture in this area.

. Another expensive type of china is the older Wedgwood jasperware. Some salt collectors specialize in this kind and are anxious to find new shapes. We have a square one that several people would like to buy – one suggested that we could remember her in our will. The other ceramics that come to mind are the faience (think Quimper) and majolica salts. Here the material (pottery) and workmanship are not outstanding, but this does not dampen the enthusiasm of people who collect them.

	
<p><i>Russian Cloisonné Silver</i></p>	<p><i>English Silver 1795</i></p>
	
<p><i>Battersea Enamel Salt</i></p>	
	
<p><i>Royal Bayreuth</i></p>	<p><i>Meissen Type</i></p>
	
<p><i>Square Jasperware</i></p>	<p><i>Faience Lady with Baskets</i></p>

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. So far we have looked at some expensive salts. Now we'd like to cover a few rare ones that are special to us. All are pattern glass. We don't really know their value— we're not ready to part with them and we're not sure what the price should be if we were. They are all glass because we know more about this kind and are able to properly classify them. We probably have some rare china and metal salts – certainly ones that we've never seen anywhere else – but we don't have the sources to check against.

First is one we found in a dusty corner in an antique shop in New Hampshire. It is a milk glass master in the Fostoria ATLANTA pattern. The lion heads at the corners have tarnished gilding, and the glass has been frosted with acid. We contacted the Early American Pattern Glass people about it, and found two who collected the pattern, had a few other shapes in milk glass, but had never seen the master salt in that color. Needless to say it is one of our most appreciated ones.

Next is the BANDED STAR master. We saw one in a collection, and searched for one for years after that before a salt friend spotted one in a dealer's booth. It had been found in Colorado (of all places!) and we said "We'll take it" without even asking the price (the dealer was a friend – it was reasonable). Also in the pattern area, we have a green EMPRESS (by Riverside) in both the individual and master sizes. The clear ones are scarce – the green ones are gems in our collection.

The Heisey URN pattern is not uncommon (though not cheap, since the Heisey collectors want it too). The catalogs show 3 sizes, and for years we had only two of them. A friend who had bought salts from us found a set of the mid-size ones with 8 sides (they are 2-5/8" across the top) and graciously sold us one of them. She sold another on Ebay for several times what she had paid for it.

Finally we have the TEPEE pattern by Duncan. We have owned the one in the books (H&J 2539) for years, but a dealer friend found this one and offered it to us. It is on the right in the picture and is taller than the usual one and has a scalloped rim. We wrote the Duncan Collectors organization about it, and they reported that one of their members had one but they knew nothing further. They did agree it is a salt, however – the toothpick is well known and is different.

We've certainly left out some of your favorites, but we've just sampled the subject. We hope you have some rare or expensive salts in your collection. It is fun to find one and even more fun if it is a bargain. Keep hunting!

