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Purchasing a Tiffany Lamp

By MaryAnn Linden

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By MaryAnn Linden © 2005

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When selecting a Tiffany lamp the primary consideration you must look for, after deciding on a particular design, is the use of the glass in the lamp. So then begs the question; what makes one lamp shine with beautiful color and ambient light and another with the same design looks completely flat? It is the type of glass used.

Avoid Dull - Colorless Glass

Once you have seen a Tiffany lamp that has the dull colored glass you will be able to spot them a mile away. When the lamp is not lit the lampshade looks quite dull and almost colorless. For instance, you think the color is blue or green but there is no intensity to the color of the glass. A Tiffany lampshade should be just as beautiful unlit as lit.

Textured Glass in Tiffany Lamps

Another thing to look for in the glass is the character or texture of it. Even in pictures of Tiffany lamps you can see that they have variegated or different hues of color in each piece of glass. Also, clear glass is not the glass of choice. It is used as a design element, because it will

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make the lamp sparkle where the light comes through. Most times the clear colored glasses are textured too to give more depth to the picture the lamp is trying to convey. Because that is what a Tiffany lampshade is, a rounded picture put on a lampshade. If you look at it that way you will then be able to see right away the lamp that doesn't have anything to show. It will just be a mishmash of glass slapped together trying to pass itself off as a Tiffany lampshade.

Copper Foiling in Tiffany Lamps

The next thing to look for is the how the copper foil interrupts the flow of the lamp. I say this because if the copper foiling process, which is what holds the pieces of glass together, is so obvious and thick that your eye is drawn to it, then you have a bad copper foil job. I rarely run across a lamp with this problem, but when I have it was very obvious, even online. And, these were the same lamps that had colorless dull glass, and for some reason also used a lot of clear glass too. I think the manufacturer realized that the lamp was going to be so dark that they needed the clear glass to give off some light.

Building a Picture

The last consideration is the way the glass was cut. This is not always a truism, but as I look at my lamps I always notice that there was a rhyme and reason to why a particular piece of glass was cut with the grain or design going through it a particular way. The leaves might have longer lines to denote length. A flower petal will have the grain going one way on one petal and another way on another. And, when you stand back you can see what the artist was painting with the glass. And, if it is obvious what the picture is then the artist has done his job well.

You would think that I would say that price was a consideration, but nowadays it really isn't. With the advent of the Internet we are a global market and Tiffany lamps are being produced all over the world at varying prices. I have seen dragonfly lamps that are absolutely beautiful priced at one online store in the \$100.00 range, and at another store in the \$900 range because it is made of Favre glass and has six Favre candelabra lamps which

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light the lampshade. It all depends on what you are looking for. They are all beautiful in their own way, notwithstanding the price you pay.

So go out there and have a look at some Tiffany lamps. You won't regret it. They add a touch of class to your decor and a wonderful source of light for any room. They come in table lamps, floor lamps, hanging pendants, chandeliers, billiard, sconce, shades for ceiling fans, mini or accent lamps, and close or flush ceiling lights.

MaryAnn is a longtime collector of Tiffany lamps and enjoys passing on her love of the craftsmanship and history of the Tiffany lamps to her friends and acquaintances. Her love of glass also extends to handblown vases. Subscribe to her free newsletter for interesting bits of history and information on

good buys on Tiffany lamps and vases at <http://www.tiffany-glass-etc.com>

Dragonfly Tiffany Style Lamp – A Classic Tiffany Piece

By Pamela Tice

The Dragonfly Tiffany Lamp is one of Louis Tiffany's best known works and perhaps represents him at the height of his creative genius. Even if Tiffany had spent his entire life designing and creating the lamps that he is best known for, the Dragonfly Tiffany lamp would still be a crowing jewel in his portfolio. The truly amazing thing about Louis Tiffany is that his infamous Dragonfly Tiffany lamp and all of his lamps were representative of but one facet of his wide-ranging and prolific career.

Born the son of Charles Lewis Tiffany, a prominent and respected jewelry retailer, Louis Tiffany had all of the advantages. Rather than be dwarfed by his father's shadow and success, Louis Tiffany set out to leave his own indelible mark upon the world. This he did, time and time again. First as an artist where he gained prominence crafting unique and coveted mosaics. Then, he began concentrating on home décor and made a mark in the world of interior design with clients like Samuel Clemens and the White House. He next turned to glass as a way to bring beauty into the home and world and began designing stained glass windows for churches and ultimately businesses and private citizens. Then, inspiration seemed to strike and he began using the scraps from his stained glass window creations to make his infamous lampshades.

Thus, creations such as the Dragonfly Tiffany lamp were just the culmination of a lifelong obsession with bringing beauty into the world and they began as scraps of opalescent glass! And yet, there is nothing that is second-hand about the Dragonfly Tiffany lamp or any of Tiffany's famed lampshades. Each and every lamp produced by Tiffany and his stable of designers was a unique piece of artwork. At a time when the rest of the world was racing forward with industrialization and attempting to mass produce anything and everything, Tiffany created pieces like the Dragonfly Tiffany lamp in sheer defiance of all conventions of the day.

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What is truly interesting about the Dragonfly Tiffany lamp is the theme of the lamp itself. One of Tiffany's greatest pieces was inspired by, and paid homage to, a bug! Influenced by Japanese art and a lifelong fascination with horticulture, Tiffany turned to Nature for inspiration at the very moment the world was determined to conquer and defy it. Perhaps lamps like the Dragonfly Tiffany lamp were so popular because people were tired of the sterile, scientific nature of the mass produced world. If Tiffany was not tired of his world, he at the very least was determined to bring some beauty back into it and pieces like the Dragonfly Tiffany style lamp with their themes taken directly from Nature do just that.

And here we are, stepping across the threshold into a new millennium and poised to complete the work began by the industrialists in the 19th and 20th centuries. For perhaps the very same reasons that people first fell in love with Tiffany's Dragonfly Tiffany style lamp and other glass art creations, his work is once again bringing beauty into our homes and giving us a retreat from the sterile world. There are manufacturers of high quality Tiffany reproductions such as Dale Tiffany and Meyda Tiffany who use the same processes as the master himself to make one-of-a-kind pieces of art for your home, just like the Dragonfly Tiffany style lamp—and the world thanks these companies for bringing some beauty back into our homes!

Pamela Tice is the owner of numerous lighting and home decor websites including

. Her store offers product and information about

and beautiful

as well as stained glass windows and fireplace

screens that add beauty and richness to your home.



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