

FROM KING FEATURES WEEKLY SERVICE,  
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KOVELS ANTIQUES AND COLLECTING

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PHOTO CREDIT: Woody Auction

PHOTO CAPTION: Colorful opaque glass was a popular choice for decorative lampshades in the late 19th to early 20th centuries.

## Glass Shades

The invention of the electric light bulb didn't just introduce an improved, more convenient, safer light source. It gave designers new inspiration. As the use of electric lights spread during the late 19th to early 20th centuries, lamps with colorful opaque glass shades became popular. They made beautiful decorations, whether on or off, and the intense electric light shining through the glass often gave the design a whole new look.

Tiffany, Handel, and Pairpoint made the most famous lamps of the time. They have stunning, high-quality shades made with complex techniques, and the bases are usually bronze and often have intricate designs or figural shapes. Unsurprisingly, they can sell for tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars today — a windfall if you've inherited one but a bit of an extravagant purchase for most collectors.

Similar lamps made by the many other companies active at the time may not quite reach those heights, but especially striking and well-made examples can still sell for impressive prices, even without a known maker. Even though its maker was not identified, this lamp sold for \$3,000 at Woody Auction. Its light blue, orange, and caramel-colored glass panels make an eye-catching combination, especially with the ornate scrolls, wreaths, and flowers on its metal frame. A lighted base adds to its appeal.

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**Q:** Our handpainted Nippon chocolate set, including a pitcher and five cups and saucers, has been in our family for over 60 years. It is decorated with roses and gold and has a blue mark on the base with a leaf. We are wondering what it is worth so that we can list it correctly in our estate.

**A:** The leaf mark was used by the Morimura Bros., who opened their trading company in 1876. In

1904, they founded the company that was later known as Noritake, one of the most famous names in 20th-century Japanese ceramics. Morimura and Noritake used the maple leaf mark with the words "Nippon" and "Hand Painted" starting in 1891. The mark could be blue, green, or magenta. Nippon chocolate sets the size of yours, with the blue leaf mark and similar decorations, have sold for about \$150 to \$300 at recent auctions.

For a more precise estimate, you may want to contact a collector's club, like the International Nippon Collectors Club ([nipponcollectorsclub.com](http://nipponcollectorsclub.com)), or an auction house or dealer that sells similar ceramics. To list the value of your estate, you may need to get a professional appraisal; however, they tend to be very expensive and may not be necessary if the value of the item is under a certain amount.

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**TIP:** When changing an antique, like rewiring a lamp or reupholstering a chair seat, keep the old pieces and parts you remove. When you sell your antique, the new owner will pay more if the old parts are part of the history.

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## CURRENT PRICES

*Game*, mahjong, bone tiles, wood case, foldout front, brass mounts, two top handles, label, Mah-Jongg Sales Co. of America, San Francisco, 7 x 8 x 8 inches, \$100.

*Carousel*, horse, jumper, walnut, front hooves raised, painted, multi-color saddle and blanket, carved mane and tail, rectangular base, 47 x 55 1/2 inches, \$290.

*Dental*, tool cabinet, quartersawn oak, hinged lid, pullout front, three folding shelves over 10 drawers, marked, H. Gerstner & Sons, 15 1/2 x 16 x 9 inches, \$420.

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