

European Figural Ornaments



Written by: Kevin Milaeger
November 16th, 2022

We've been fortunate this year to acquire a large number of glass bird ornaments. Most of these are from Germany or Austria. A few are to be displayed with ornament hooks, suspended, but most of them have a clip and are meant to be clipped on a tree branch. These are vintage ornaments, so sometimes the clips don't function quite like they used to. They may need additional support. I've got a number of these that need support on my tree at home, and they display very nicely. These lovely birds usually don't seriously resemble any true birds as found in nature. And anyway, being made in Europe, they don't have the same birds in Europe as we do, for the most part. They have owls, for example, but different from North American owls. So don't be looking too hard to find a specific type of bird. Modern ornament manufacturers such as Old World Christmas have created some birds that are reasonably accurate, at least at first glance. The hardest thing for them to deal with is scale. They might make a hummingbird, for example, that is roughly the size of their eagle. You have to overlook that sort of thing. If it were true to scale, their hummingbird wouldn't be much bigger than the period at the end of this sentence. That wouldn't be too showy.



Birds small



Birds medium

I like clip-on ornaments because they sit on top of the tree branches rather than being suspended from them. Too often I've seen fully decorated trees that, though they had plenty of ornaments, they looked incomplete and wanting because the tops of the branches were bare. Depending on the style of tree, this can be very distracting. There are many kinds of clip-on ornaments, but birds are by far the most popular. They look very natural used this way, as if they were sitting on perches. The variety is endless. You can never have too many.



Birds large



Birds assorted

Music is another common theme in vintage ornaments. Before WWII, playing a musical instrument was much more a part of everyday life than it is now. Remember, this was before television and other types of entertainment. Lots of folks had familiarity with different instruments, and their interests were reflected in tree ornaments. Horns of every type were very common. Again, these usually don't bear a precise resemblance to any particular horn, just horns in general. Some of the horns are meant to be hung with hooks, and others are just slipped over branch tips. Stringed instruments of many types were also popular, and we have a few to offer you. Drums were also common, and they were offered in many colors. We only have one drum right now. I wish we had more, but we just never know what we're going to find.



Birds with hooks



Teapots, etc.

Teapots and other kitchen items such as lamps and urns are another common ornament category. Its another example of ornament makers making ornaments that represented familiar, everyday objects. Many of these are very delicate, with spouts on the teapots, for example. I'm always amazed at how many of these we find in very good condition. They must have been loved and cherished all these years. Now, they are waiting for the next person to cherish them.



Musical Instruments 1



Musical Instruments 2

Please email me (kevin@milaegers.com) with your questions and comments!