

Antique lamps surge in value

Home lighting trends offer more than a flicker of nostalgia. In fact, the mass market is aglow with traditional lamps.

"What really excites the public is period decorating," says Rhett Sypher, president of Shoal Creek of Annapolis, Md. "High tech and contemporary do not sell very well."

Sypher says 95 percent of his company's 800 styles are traditional. Many have period detailing that fits into rooms with Victorian, neoclassical, French country, 18th-century or even Russian court decorating schemes.

Interest in 19th-century designs appears to stem from the Arts & Crafts period, which began about 1888. That era is especially rich as a source for lighting since it coincided with early electrification of American homes. New York City, for example, was electrified in the 1890s.

The cost of period originals designed by famous early 20th-century designers such as Gustav Stickley, Dirk Van Erp and Frank Lloyd Wright put them out of reach of most consumers. But reproductions that recreate the feeling are readily available.

One popular style reminiscent of the period uses mica lampshades. The mica sheets treated with shellac to give them a smoky amber translucence are handblasted stained glass and inserted into metal channels.

WHEN SHOAL CREEK first offered mica-shade lamps in Arts & Crafts styles two years ago, they were popular enough for the company to add to the collection. Now there are 18 styles at prices ranging from \$200 to \$500. Mica shades are also available on other lamps for about \$100 extra.

Jerry Cohen of The Mission Oak Shop in Woodstock, Conn., stocks and refinishes reproductions of arts lamps and fixtures by Stickley, Van Erp and Wright are doing well all around the country. The lamps, which sell for \$425 to \$5,500 each, are made by Michael Adams, a Syracuse, N.Y., craftsman.

Cohen started buying the reproductions to sell in his antiques store in 1984 after he saw them in a Syracuse antiques shop. He began distributing Adams' lamps nationwide in 1987.

"Some antiques dealers don't like reproductions because they think they undercut sales of the originals," he says. "I don't think we are going to ruin our market. We don't have many customers who can pay \$50,000 for a lamp, but we do have customers who can pay \$2,000 or \$3,000."

ALTHOUGH ORIGINALS by top names are scarce and expensive, there is a good supply of less exalted turn-of-the-century lighting, according to Bill Langton, a Norwalk, Conn., dealer. Langton recommends old lamps he finds at auctions and house sales, antiques stores and flea markets.

He says demand is driving up prices and creating scarcity in a field where 20 years ago finding customers was the biggest problem. For example, a gasolier (a hanging gas lamp converted to electric) that sells for \$1,000 today went for about \$150 in 1970. A converted brass oil lamp with a glass shade that once sold for \$45 now runs about \$170.

Besides specialty stores such as Langton's Ye Old Lamp Shop, other sources for old lighting are auctions, estate sales and, if you are lucky, flea markets. Typically, those bought as-is need new wiring and socket replacements. If brass, they require refinishing.

Here's how to stop burglars

(AP) If you worry about burglars — and most of us do — there is much you can do to prevent illegal entry. Here is some information that can reduce your chances of being burglarized and provide you with greater peace of mind.

• If you spot people in your neighborhood behaving suspiciously, notify the police immediately.

For example, burglars often cruise in pairs. Upon seeing an empty garage or a car pulling out of a driveway, they ring the doorbell. If someone answers, they ask an innocent question and leave. If there is no response, they try to enter the home.

• Speak to your local police to find out which entry methods intruders favor in your area. Then, examine your home for weak points.

• Burglars commonly enter through an unlocked door, break in through a cellar window, break simple locks on doors or use force until the screens burst out of the wood or the frame gives way.

Replace a hollow wooden door or flimsy door frame with a solid wooden (or even a steel) door mounted in a sturdy frame. Then equip the door with a deadbolt lock. A good bolt is one inch thick and has a 1-inch throw.

• Overgrown shrubbery and high hedges provide as much privacy for burglars as they do for you. Keep hedges trimmed, prune tree branches and remove trellises — especially if they provide access to second-floor windows. Keep basement windows — a favorite entry point for burglars — locked and free of foliage.

• If you live on the first or second floor of an apartment building, keep all windows locked. Lock windows or doors that lead to balconies, rooftops or fire escapes. Be sure fire escape doors are easy to unlock in case of an emergency.

• Burglaries in occupied homes are not as rare as you might expect. Keep your doors locked even when you're home.

• Before moving into a new house or apartment, have the cylinders of each door lock in your new home changed.

• If you have a telephone answering machine, don't let the greeting message reveal your whereabouts. Say simply that you can't come to the phone right now, but you will return the call as soon as possible.

• Don't put your name on your mailbox. Burglars will phone to learn if anyone is at home.

• If you're planning an evening out or going on vacation, set an automatic timer to create the illusion that someone is at home. Use it to activate lamps, television sets and radios that will make the house seem occupied.

• Before leaving for an extended period, arrange to have your home appear occupied. Ask someone to park a car in the driveway and move it periodically. Arrange to have the snow shoveled or the grass mowed. Have mail and newspaper deliveries halted until you return.

• Avoid attracting unwanted attention to your valuables. For example, if a new stereo arrives, don't put the labeled carton in the trash without flattening it inside out.

• Neighborhood watch programs work well. Post signs warning strangers that they are being observed.

• Finally, a family dog is one of the best burglar alarms you can have. The sound of loud, frantic barking is often all that's needed to discourage a

would-be intruder and alert family members and neighbors.

Here are some ways you can minimize the extent of loss if your house is burglarized:

- Don't keep cash around — traveler's checks are safer.
- Leave some money and less-expensive valuables in the open and hope a burglar will overlook the gem collection in the bottom of the goldfish tank. If you hide valuables, it's a good idea to keep a map of their locations in a safe-deposit box or with your attorney.
- Make your valuables harder for thieves to sell and easier for police to identify by engraving your Social Security number on them. You can borrow an engraving tool from the local police department.

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