

Carnival Glass Epergnes

By Cale Wilcox

Have you ever seen the word epergne when reading about or researching carnival glass? What a funny looking word. I bet you are asking how we even pronounce the word? First, let's discuss how we say the word. The best advice I can give you is to remember that the letters g and s are silent so it is pronounced e-pern.



Now let's talk about the definition of an epergne. It is most likely derived from the French language meaning "saving" and or "spare." It is easily remembered as a fancy way of displaying side dishes, fruits, deserts or finger foods. Most traditional epergnes had a large central bowl or basket sitting on feet. They were usually made of silver however around the start of the 20th century glass became frequently used in crafting an epergne.



Fenton Vintage

As we discuss epergnes in the carnival glass era we find that very few styles were designed that became part of the company's product line. In the American carnival glass era only two styles are found. The first consist of a centerpiece bowl and one horn or lily that sits in the center of the bowl. These designs were made by most of the manufacturers and consisted of a single pattern in a variety of colors. The examples pictured above are Dugan's Fishnet in Peach Opal and Fenton's Vintage in marigold and amethyst.

Carnival Glass Epergnes, cont.

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Northwood Wide Panel

The Northwood glass company took the epergne to the next level by offering the Wide Panel Epergne in their production line. These pieces had no patterns and were made with a large center piece bowl and 4 horns or lilies in an array of colors. Colors included green, purple, marigold, white, ice blue, ice green and one known in aqua opal. The bowl most likely during that time was used for fruit with flowers placed into the lilies. This easily allowed the passion of the outdoors to be brought into their homes.

Epergnes can be hard to find for several reasons including the limited amounts made by the manufacturer. Another main reason is that these are rather delicate, have numerous removable pieces, and just did not survive without damage or sadly breakage. Epergnes can make a dramatic statement in your collection and are also functional even in today's period.

Happy Hunting!