

# Auto Vases

By Tina Kaasmann-Dunn



Glass Bud vases added a touch of elegance to early motor cars; however, they were not meant just for decoration. They served a special purpose. Upholstery in vehicles dating back to the 1920s was made with horse hair or mohair. When these seats got wet (often the driver and/or passengers got caught in the rain), they emitted an odor not unlike that of a wet dog!!

This was a time before car heaters, air conditioning or even those little pine tree air fresheners. Bud vases, with fresh flowers in them, were attached to the sides of luxury cars to provide some relief from the damp smell. Later, Henry Ford even offered them in some of his Model Ts.

Today these little six- to eight-inch glass vases are relatively unknown to many people, but, highly sought by those in the know.



The vases were manufactured by many different companies and were made of crystal, pressed glass and even cut glass. Even Steuben, a very prestigious glass house, made them.

A variety of colors were offered including clear glass, vaseline

(green/yellow), blue, green, teal, and even cobalt blue. The dark colored vase in the photo with three vases is a deep teal (green/blue) color and quite rare.

The vases were sold in pairs – one for each side of the car. Designs varied and included molded and etched flowers as well as abstract designs in the art deco style.

They were attached to the frame of the automobile by means of a chrome, stainless steel, brass or even a sterling silver bracket that the vase then slid into. Often when a car was sold or scrapped, the owners lifted out the vase, but left behind the bracket. Finding a vase with its original bracket attached is a big plus and adds to its value. These little vases cannot stand by themselves as their bottoms are pointed, so, without a bracket to hold them upright, they cannot be used for their original purpose. Even so, they are beautiful when lit by the sunlight.

Many examples have tops that are slightly curved inward to keep water from spilling out.

I found my first auto vase at a bottle show years ago and have looked for them ever since. Prices vary, but, you can usually find examples in the \$50 - \$100 range – or even less as most people have no idea what they are! Odd colors, like cobalt and teal, or matched pairs with original brackets, will fetch higher prices.

Next time you are at a car show with 1920 luxury automobiles, check out the inside for these little gems.



**In preparation for a new membership directory in early 2011, please verify your information. If changes are necessary, please contact:**

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