

Amazing Prices Paid For Glass Insulators

When it comes to antique glass insulators, value is mostly about shape and color. The rarest ones sell for more than \$10,000, says Bill Meier of Bill and Jill Insulators, Carlisle, Mass.

One sold recently for \$20,000 because it was oddly shaped and only 4 or 5 are known to exist, he adds.

One thing that is unusual about insulators is that a 100-year-old insulator can be very common and only worth a dollar, Meier notes. That's because billions of the glass caps were made, first for telegraph poles in the 1850's and then for power and telephone poles until the 1960's.

The earliest insulators were threadless and slipped over a peg on a pole. Threaded insulators were developed in 1865. These insulators screwed on a pin like a nut screws on a bolt.

Meier, who started collecting as a child, says there are certain things to look for.

Collectors often try to collect one of every shape - such as those that deviate from round, have projections on the side or a slotted top and are higher value. Many of the designs were prototypes and not widely adopted, Meier says.

Color, especially purple and bright hues,

is also sought after. At a 2014 auction, for example, a common-shaped, but brilliant orange amber insulator that usually comes in light aqua, sold for almost \$11,000.

Finally, insulators made by small companies tend to be worth more since fewer were made.

Also valuable are the first insulators that were threadless. If they are in good shape they can sell high such as a dark blue Civil War era insulator that sold recently for \$1,925.

People interested in insulators can find information at www.insulators.info.

You can purchase catalogs or check out online auctions conducted by many businesses such as the Meiers, who are hosting an auction in late September. Dedicated auctions usually net more profit for sellers than eBay and other Internet sites, Meier says.

Meier added that he and other auction businesses can usually let people know if they have a valuable insulator just by a description over the phone.

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Some of the insulators Bill Meier owns include model 065-1-TIP (left) \$3,960; right \$4,180.



Insulator 181.1.TIP (left) \$4,125; right \$5,390.

Threshing Machine Deer Stand

David Mackenthun bought an old McCormick Deering pull-type threshing machine at an auction for \$25 and then converted the old steel-wheeled harvester into a mobile deer stand.

"It makes a great deer stand, and I spent almost nothing on it," says Mackenthun. "I can move it where I want and, thanks to a heater inside, it's always warm. The windows lift out of the way to shoot."

Mackenthun stripped away everything except the thresher's body and then built a 5-ft. long roofed stand inside. He bolted a pair of 3-in. angle irons on the floor from front to back and screwed 2 by 6's across them to form the floor. The stand bolts to the floor and also to the thresher's body. He installed a door on back of the body and added a pair of homemade metal steps.

He added a carpet and insulated the top and sides. The back window flips up and is off an

old camper. The flipped-up window attaches to the rafters with a small metal bracket.

"It's very comfortable inside. A small LP heater keeps me warm no matter what the weather," says Mackenthun. "The stand is fitted with side windows that open up and hook onto the stand's rafters, and the end windows also flip out. I also keep a wheeled office chair inside.

"I store the LP heater on front of the thresher as well as a big pickup bed toolbox that I cut in half to store my sleeping bag."

Mackenthun says he sold all the cast iron metal that he stripped away from the thresher for \$80. "My total cost to build the deer stand was about zero," he notes.

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David Mackenthun converted an old McCormick Deering pull-type threshing machine into this mobile deer stand. "I spent almost nothing on it," he says.

Acrobatic Skill Needed To Ride Monowheel Cycle

The idea of building a "monowheel" motorcycle has been around for decades but most people have never seen one. Dave Southall in Staffordshire, England, told FARM SHOW he can pretty much bring traffic to a standstill when he takes his monowheel cycle out for a spin.

Southall has been modifying vehicles since he was a boy on a Staffordshire farm. That led him to earn a Ph. D. in electrical engineering but somehow he ended up working as an acrobat for 15 years. Both sets of skills were needed to build and operate his one-wheel cycle.

"A monowheel is basically two circles, one inside the other. The inner one has some form of drive that can power the outer circle around it. It's like a ball bearing but with its own power source," Southall explains. "Monowheels have been built since before 1900. They seem to attract the sort of people who build things in their sheds - people like me, I guess. Some monowheels are pedal powered and some have engines. I still have a bit of a dream to build a steam powered

one."

He built his cycle based on a photo of a 1924 circus monowheel and named it The Red Max after a UK cartoon character.

He had the outer hoop made - a 5-ft. dia., 2-in. steel tube hoop with bicycle tires he pop-riveted around the outside. He purchased a 90 cc engine with a centrifugal clutch, roller, drive wheel and gas tank, and made the rest of the parts in his shop.

"I think it helps that I've worked as an acrobat and ridden motorcycles all my life," Southall says. "You have to set off very carefully; if you accelerate too hard you'll just go round and round within the outer circle, like a gerbil in a wheel. If you take it steady the outer ring rotates, and you stay in the inner ring and the whole vehicle moves forward. Braking has to be done very, very carefully. If you apply the brakes too hard you effectively lock the inner and outer rings together and over and over you go. It's basically a mechanical gyroscope."

Though he moved on to other projects for a London-based TV show, he still rides the



Dave Southall's home-built monowheel is basically 2 circles, one inside the other. The inner one uses an engine to drive the outer circle around it.

monocycle occasionally after lawn mower racing, another of his hobbies.

Southall is busy working on a couple of new projects: a bottle rocket jet pack-powered stunt dummy and a diesel-powered

chopper with tilting sidecar.

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