

Type of Buying Guide: behavioral

Keywords/Categories on eBay: Pottery & Glass

How to Buy Vintage Decanters on eBay

[Decanters](#) are vessels made to hold liquids, notably [wine](#). They are more likely to have a large base that bows out and a more slender neck. They have been a part of society and tradition since wines have existed. Their purpose is not only for presentation, but also decanters serve to decant and aerate wine, increasing the potential of the wine itself. They allow wine to speak for itself by providing a more anonymous appearance than a wine bottle. Many vintage decanters are beautiful pieces that can serve as a source of pride for many hosts. Vintage decanters are specialty products that can be found at many stores that stock fine cookware and serving presentation goods. These can be found in specialty stores, and online retailers, like [eBay](#). It is easy to know what vintage decanter to choose when customers consider the purpose, including decanting and aeration; types of vintage decanters, including size, material, shape, stoppers, and condition; pricing; and how to buy a vintage decanter on eBay.

Purpose

Decanters have many purposes. Admirers will first notice that they are decorative. Usually they will have a sleek form and are made of [glass](#). Using a decanter for wine can often be a sign of respect for an old wine, or a mark of assurance for a younger wine. Not only that, but using a decanter can be helpful in keeping the anonymity of a wine. With a decanter, the wine is able to speak for itself, without the crutch of a label.

Though decanters can be used for any liquid substance, they are most commonly used for wine. The form of a decanter allows for the decanting process whereby pouring liquid from one [vessel](#) into another allows for sediment to stay largely in the main vessel. Aeration promotes wine to breathe, which is important for many wines. By providing a wide base with a great surface area, wine is able to aerate in an effective manner.

Decanting

Modern winemaking does not necessarily call for decanting, since sediment is limited; however, older wines can often benefit from this process. As older wines age, they produce sediment. This is because these wines may not have been filtered or clarified, as most modern wines have been. By pouring wine from its original [bottle](#) to the decanter, sediment that has settled to the bottom of the bottle stays in the original bottle, with the liquid that is free from sediment left in the decanter. It is a simple process that allows for a clean wine.

Aeration

Many have heard the phrase to let wine breathe. Aeration is thought to lessen the harshness of tannins or potential wine faults. The oxygenation process can be especially helpful with Port, Borolo, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Bordeaux wines. Decanters mimic the [wine glass](#)

swirling that many wine aficionados practice as ritual before experiencing wine by oxygenating a large surface area of wine that is exposed to air.

However, there are many who believe aeration using a decanter can expel more aroma than it stimulates, since the oxygenation process is more comprehensive than with wine swirling. Also, opponents state that aeration does not actually soften tannins. The process of decanting actually changes the perception of sulfates and other chemical compounds, which mirrors softening of tannins. Actual softening of tannins would occur only during the winemaking process when polymerization occurs.

Types of Vintage Decanters

Decanters have been popular for centuries, so vintage decanters are not particularly difficult to come by. However, finding one that is in the ideal condition, size, and material may be more difficult. It is important for shoppers to consider what their expectations by weighing the most important attributes.

Size

Most decanters are able to contain a standard bottle of wine, which is three quarters of a liter. Selecting a decanter with enough room for an entire bottle of wine is a good idea for hosting. However, a smaller decanter may be preferable for those interested in serving just a few glasses. It is unnecessary to have an extremely large decanter because people often serve one standard size bottle of wine at a time.

Material

Early decanters have been made in materials ranging from [earthenware](#) to bronze. Ancient Romans even used silver and gold when glass production was limited. Most vintage decanters and modern decanters are made of glass. Their price and durability varies significantly depending on the material used. However, it is also important to consider the quality of the actual material used. The thickness of glass and carat of gold all help determine the item's worth.

Shape

The elongated neck opening to the widened base was developed by the Venetians in the Renaissance and is the general model by which most decanters take form. The decanter's belly can be more or less exaggerated, depending on the design. Neck length can differ and bodies can vary widely in shape. Modern decanters often have a very fluid shape, while many vintage decanters resemble apothecary and [perfume bottles](#).

Stoppers

Some decanters have [stoppers](#), or an enclosure over the mouth of the decanter to prevent further oxygen from entering the vessel. Stoppers can be effective when wine has been oxygenated for an effective amount of time and will still sit in the vintage decanter before consumed. They are a good option if shoppers are considering keeping wine in their decanter for a period of time longer than a few hours.

Condition

Vintage decanters may have signs of wear and age, depending on their material. However, if the decanter is made of glass and has any chips or significant scratches, it should be avoided. A flaw in glass compromises the integrity of the vessel and makes the likelihood of further cracks very possible. Shoppers should take into consideration the condition of the item as a whole before committing to its purchase.

Pricing

Once shoppers have determined their expectations for vintage decanters, they can better see the price bracket of their ideal decanter. Vintage decanters can range in price from a few dollars to over a thousand dollars. Prices depend on condition, material, and design. If a vintage decanter is more ornate, it may demand a higher price. Older vintage decanters in good condition will be worth more. Also, decanters with a historic or cultural significance can be more expensive. It is important for shoppers to know their limit based on what they want from a vintage decanter. The price of the vintage decanter, as well as shipping should be put into a budget so that customers feel confident in their purchase.

How to Buy Vintage Decanters on eBay

[eBay](#) allows you to search for vintage items from a variety of sellers and locations from the convenience of your home. You are not limited by the selection in your neighborhood, and do not have to spend hours driving to specialty shops with limited selections. Simply typing “[vintage wine decanter](#)” into eBay’s search bar yields over a thousand results.

Consider the specifications you most want in a vintage decanter and add that to your search. Perhaps you are most interested in a vintage decanter from the 1950s. By typing “[1950s wine decanter](#)” you are able to see results matching those more specific details. Another way to limit search results would be to identify the material. For example, “[glass vintage wine decanter](#)” provides results limited to only vintage decanters made of glass.

It is important to consider feedback when selecting a seller. Interpreting seller reviews can allow you to predict your possible experience with the seller. Do not be afraid to contact the seller regarding any questions you may have. They are often more than willing to discuss the merits of their product. Shipping prices and delivery estimates are important aspects to acknowledge and budget for.

Conclusion

Purchasing a vintage decanter can be a way for enthusiasts to show their admiration and respect for a particular wine. Vintage decanters are lovely for gatherings and special events and can be great conversation pieces. Not only are they often beautiful pieces, but they are effective in oxygenating wine, a process most wine experts believe to be helpful in getting the most of wine. They can be made from various materials, though modern and vintage decanters are most commonly made from glass. More expensive materials, like [silver](#) and gold, and more ornate designs often qualify for a higher price. When searching for a vintage decanter, shoppers should look at the integrity of the vessel, making sure that the item is sound. If it is glass, any cracks or significant scratches can often result in further damage.

Shoppers should be sure to ask the seller any questions to feel confident in their transaction. By becoming educated in the various attributes and purposes of a vintage decanter, enthusiasts can better find their ideal match.