

Accessories Resource Team Bulletin #2

THE LATEST ON LAMPSHADES

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No longer can retailers just carry a lamp with a basic white bell shade. Customers are demanding more, much more! Unique materials, finishes, and shapes are taking lampshades from ordinary to extraordinary. Strongly influenced by current apparel fashion trends, shades are being made completely of beads, lace, unpreserved loose linen, feathers, damask, vintage fabrics, designer threads, screened silk, iridescent silk, punctured metal, wood veneer, and sheer metallic fabric.

As in clothing, creative materials are being combined with standard lamp bases in unexpected combinations. Imaginative finish treatments are applied to paper and fabric shades including antique paint color washes, upholstery trims, gold leaf accents, colored linings (especially gold, pink, and red), banded trims, embroidery, decoupage paper, and anything else you can think of!

Sassy trims such as buttons, ruffles, satin bows, and sheer slipcovers add that touch of romance that is so popular. Natural materials are more popular than ever in the form of bamboo, leaves, wood veneer, faux flowers, henna stains, faux animal looks, capiz shells, mica, and twig trims. And of course we cannot forget the evergrowing colored glass shade trend, as consumers discover the effects of colored lighting in their home.

Like plunging necklines and asymmetrical hems, shades are taking on new dimensions. Curved squares, shaped galleries, zigzag bottoms, spiraling cones, handkerchief edges, balloon hems, saucer and tube shapes, triangles,

and anything but round bells have become the norm. Vintage shapes such as Victorian scalloped chandelier shades with "crowns" and hoop skirt frames are making a large comeback.

Suppliers are often spending more time on lampshade product development than on the lamp itself. With all these options, how do retailers and manufactures ever choose a shade? ■

(Editor's Note: Ashton Harrison is owner of Shades of Light of Richmond, VA. Shades of Light encompasses a retail location, catalog division and web based retail division. Shades of Light was the 14th ARTS Awards winner in the East/Atlantic Region for lighting showroom.)

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