

Nature in Glass

HOLTZMANS' TIFFANY PURCHASE EVOLVED FROM INVESTMENT TO PASSION

By Kim Bower-Spence



The Holtzmans acquired their first Tiffany lamp, this snowball floor lamp, in Vermont in 1980.

IT WAS SNOWBALLS THAT first ignited the obsession.

Not frozen spheres of ice crystals but puffs of white petals depicted in luminous, leaded glass. A genuine Tiffany floor lamp, its pieced shade celebrating nature's beauty in awe-inspiring, man-made art.

Now Seymour '57 and Evelyn (Krohn) '58 Holtzman possess one of the largest privately held collections of Tiffany in the world, from lamps and favrile glassware, to candlesticks and desk sets and other works in glass and metal.

Seymour chairs the board of Casual Male Retail Group Inc., a specialty retailer of big and tall men's apparel with more than 500 locations. He also serves as chief executive officer and co-chairman of the board of George Foreman Enterprises Inc.

A friend located their first lamp when it went up for auction in Vermont in 1980. The Holtzmans thought they would buy the lamp, hold it a few years and resell. "When we got it, we just so

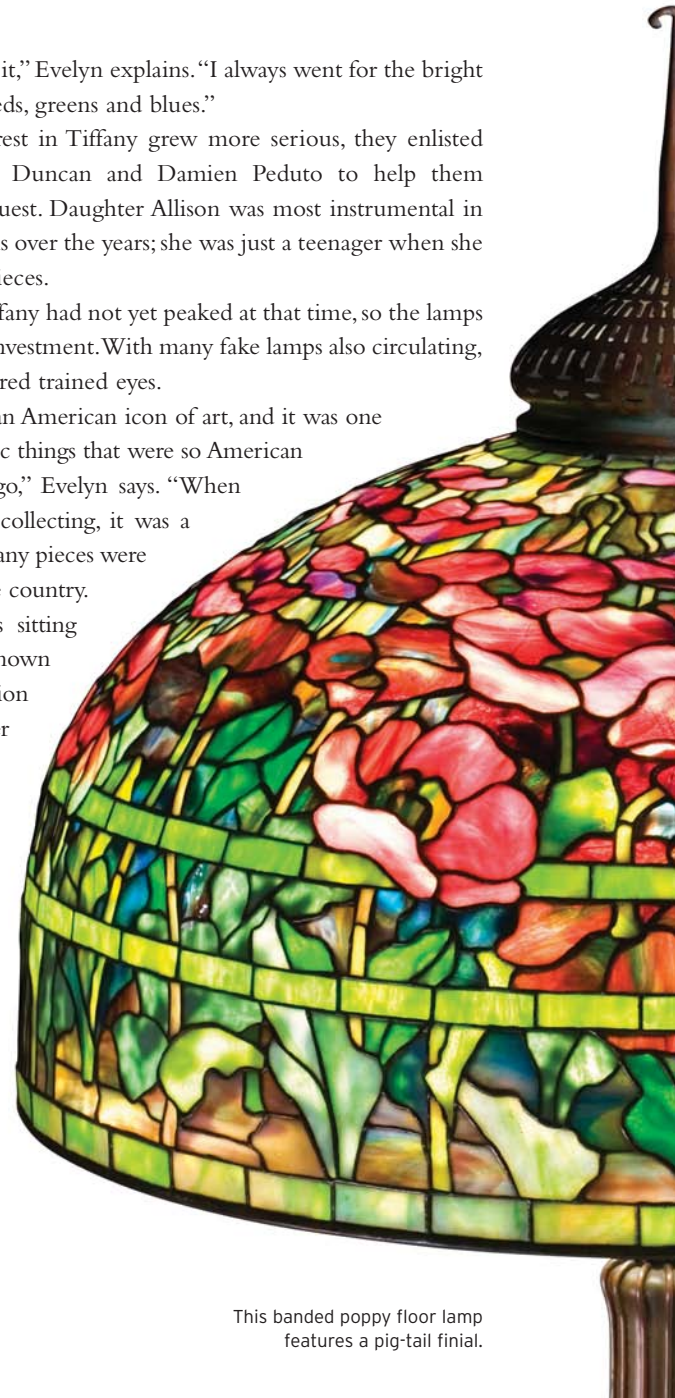
fell in love with it," Evelyn explains. "I always went for the bright colors. I liked reds, greens and blues."

As their interest in Tiffany grew more serious, they enlisted experts Alastair Duncan and Damien Peduto to help them navigate their quest. Daughter Allison was most instrumental in their acquisitions over the years; she was just a teenager when she began buying pieces.

Interest in Tiffany had not yet peaked at that time, so the lamps proved a good investment. With many fake lamps also circulating, the search required trained eyes.

"It was such an American icon of art, and it was one of the few artistic things that were so American from so long ago," Evelyn says. "When we first started collecting, it was a bargain." And many pieces were going out of the country.

Evelyn recalls sitting behind a well-known buyer at an auction house. It was her



This banded poppy floor lamp features a pig-tail finial.



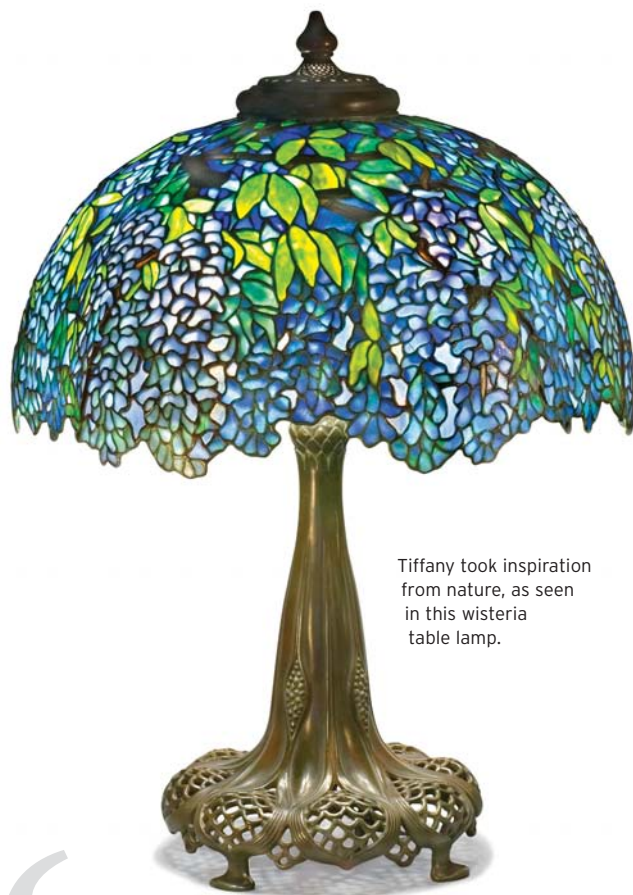
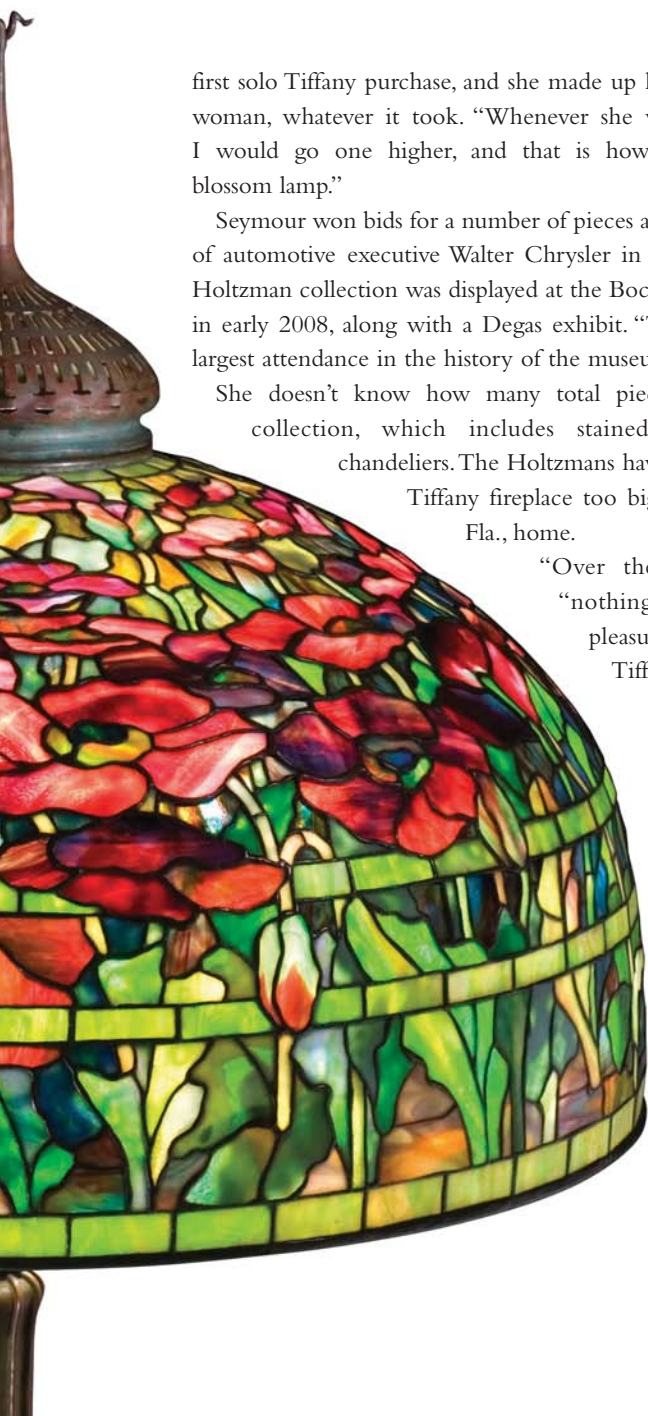
Numerous Tiffany lamps decorate the living room of the Holtzmanns' Palm Beach, Fla., home.

first solo Tiffany purchase, and she made up her mind to out-bid the woman, whatever it took. "Whenever she would raise her paddle, I would go one higher, and that is how I acquired our apple blossom lamp."

Seymour won bids for a number of pieces auctioned from the estate of automotive executive Walter Chrysler in 1989. A portion of the Holtzman collection was displayed at the Boca Raton Museum of Art in early 2008, along with a Degas exhibit. "The exhibit boasted the largest attendance in the history of the museum," Evelyn notes.

She doesn't know how many total pieces they have in their collection, which includes stained glass windows and chandeliers. The Holtzmanns have sold only one piece: a Tiffany fireplace too big for their Palm Beach, Fla., home.

"Over the years," Evelyn says, "nothing has given us more pleasure than living with our Tiffany lamps."



Tiffany took inspiration from nature, as seen in this wisteria table lamp.

“It was such an American ICON OF ART, and it was one of the few ARTISTIC things that were so AMERICAN from so long ago.”



The Holtzman family includes, from left: Evelyn, Marc, Allison, Steven and Seymour. ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE HOLTZMAN FAMILY