

Chase Lights the Way

Although the Chase Brass and Copper Company is best remembered today for its “Chase Specialties” line of cocktail and beverage items, smoking accessories, and serving pieces, Chase also produced complete lines of lamps and lighting fixtures, maintaining a separate New York showroom.



Left: The “Maryland” (No. F137) was described as blending well with all types of decoration from 1800 to the present day. It is finished in Federal brass.

Right: The “Victor Hugo” (No. G401) is part of the Georgian-design group. It was available in Regent Red, Adam Green, or Black with trimmings in Georgian Brass.



From the inception of its Specialties line in 1931, Chase had manufactured a number of novelty flashlights and small lamps. According to President F.S. Chase, the popularity of these novelty items led to the development of a line of more expensive lamps to harmonize with different periods of decoration. In Mr. Chase’s words, “Our judgment was that people would welcome a line of lamps which would be moderate in price, designed to harmonize with different periods of decoration, and which would use brass, copper, and chromium plated brass in a new way.



The “Victory” (No. F139), another of the Federal style lamps, features a globe banded with a row of 13 stars and surmounted by the American eagle. It is finished in Federal brass with a black-topped base.

Chase hired famed industrial designer Lurelle Guild to design complete lines of lamps and lighting fixtures in five period collections: Early American, Georgian, Federal, Empire, and Classic Modern. A sixth line, known as American Adaptations, contained lamps and lighting fixtures by other designers, such as Ruth Gerth and Walter Von Nessen.

Although the Early American designs are of little interest to Art Deco collectors, there are lamps in each of the other period lines that blend well with Art Deco interiors.

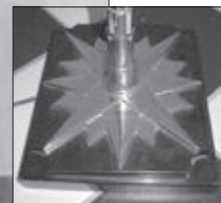
Chase was generally very good about marking its gift ware items, but lamps are another story. Few Chase lamps, other than those that were offered through the Specialties catalog, were marked. Those that were marked often had only a paper label that is long gone. As a result, identifying Chase lamps without a catalog is difficult. Identification should be simplified once the long anticipated book on Chase lamps and lighting fixtures is released.

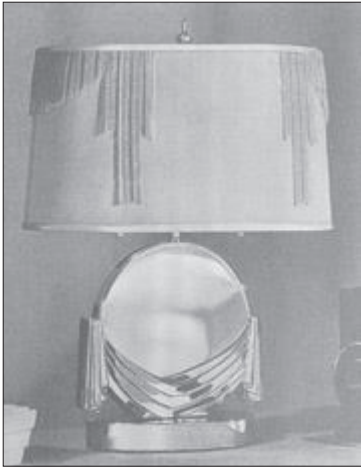
“It was our object in creating this line of lamps to give you not necessarily the largest, but the most complete, carefully styled, freshly inspired line on the market in a price range that would be no obstacle to possession.”

Lurelle Guild, 1934



The “Adams” (No. F552) was a Federal style floor lamp finished in polished chromium with a black base. It was also available in Federal brass with a brass base. Take one look at the base design and you know instantly that this “Federal” lamp will fit in nicely in any Moderne home.





The "Arcadia" (No. M50), part of the Classic Modern series, has a polished chromium base with shade that mirrors the drapery design on the base.

The "D'Orsay" (No. E400), one of Chase's Empire-design lamps, has a base bordered in stars and finely modeled arrows leaning against a black sphere. Finished in Empire brass.



In designing the modern lamps, so refreshingly new in spirit, we have utilized the popular sheen of chromium in combination with black and colors, and sparkling crystal in forms that are fitting to the ultra-modern penthouse but that are conservative enough to be a real note of beauty in a setting that is classic modern.

Lurelle Guild, 1934

The "Lady Godey" (No. E207), part of the Empire collection, is "perfectly suited to Empire or Victorian decoration. The hand is made of the finest procelain, with the cuff, lamp-base, and column in Empire brass. The shade is of Wedgwood blue Claire-de-Lune, trimmed with white braid and chromium balls.



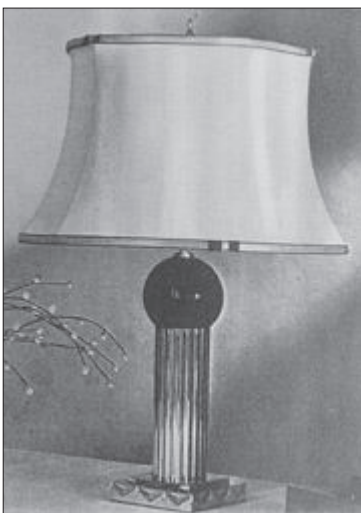
Flea Market Finds

I found this Chase floor lamp at a flea market in Brimfield, Massachusetts in May. It was the first Chase floor lamp I had seen in 25 years of collecting. The lamp is not marked, but I knew instantly that it was Chase from the 1934 lamp catalog. The full length picture is from the catalog, the close up of the base is my new lamp. As rare as Chase lamps are, I somehow managed to find a second floor lamp at a small antique mall in Plantsville, Connecticut. Sadly, I found no Chase in Waterbury and no Manning Bowman in Meriden.



The "Doric" (M506), from the Classic Modern collection, has a fluted column of polished chromium supporting a royal blue Biedermier glass ball. Its base is decorated with a modernized version of swag design.

The Delphic (No. M 353), is from the Classic Modern collection and comes finished in polished chromium with white enamel trim.



Send a picture and brief description of your latest "find" to Editor, Trans-Lux, PO Box 11090, Washington, DC 20008.