

Collecting



FREE SPIRITS

Decorated with delicate blooms that seem to be dancing in the wind, these Victorian tumblers are the flower children of barware. And they are authentically Bohemian: Glassmakers in that region first made them in the 1800s, molding colorful molten glass into credit card-thin cups and baking on lasting hand-painted designs (and sometimes gilded rims, as shown at top left). Later, companies in other parts of Europe and the U.S. followed suit. Unlike Moroccan and Indian tea glasses, which are similar but fluted in shape, and made from clear glass dipped into bright lacquer that can flake over time, Victorian versions are straight-sided. Back in the day, you could buy sets of six with a pitcher or punch bowl, but they chipped easily, so you're more likely to find singles or pairs now. And that's what makes them fun to hunt and gather. Since they're consistent in size—most measure about four inches tall; cordial glasses (bottom right), just two—and typically cost under \$25 each, you can mix and match to your heart's content. Put them out for wine or water, and drink in a summer of love.

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