

The History of Lotte Lamps and the Bostlund Family

The Bostlund family originated in Copenhagen, Denmark, where the husband Gunnar trained at the Technical University as a ceramic engineer. His wife Lotte trained at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and the Danish School for Arts and Crafts. The original family business was in the production of technical ceramics - namely porcelain insulators - until a factory fire destroyed the business in 1952. Lotte had been occupied with painting and raising her fledgling family at the time. As rebuilding anything in the years after WWII in Europe was a challenge, the young family decided to emigrate, and made a new home in Oak Ridges, near Toronto, Ontario.

The husband and wife team began developing ceramic designs for Gunnar to produce, beginning with art pottery, including vases, teapots, and salt and pepper shakers. The very first lamps were produced in 1956. Two of the original three models continue in production today.

By the early 1960's, their son Morten had developed the fiberglass lampshades, and the product we know as Lotte Lamps was now complete. The popularity of Danish Modern design helped propel the business to solid growth, and now employed all of the Bostlund children as well.



Storefront window of Georg Jensen's on Fifth Avenue, New York City 1962



The entire family is shown together at the right, along with a selection of lamp bases, from the mid-1960's. While production began in Canada, it was expanded into the US in the mid-1960's, first in Batavia, NY and then to Holley, NY (between Rochester and Buffalo, NY) where it remained until 1997. The fiberglass lampshades were the invention of Morten, pictured at the top. The marketing of the lamps included marketing of the family, very much in the style of the Von Trapps.

Many of the earlier lamps were either hand-painted or hand carved by Lotte and others in the family. There is currently a lively market for the vintage carved and painted lamps, with many people re-discovering them in attics, garage sales, thrift stores, and finding their way to auctions. Sales have been reported up to \$1500 for a pair of original, signed lamps. A sampling of the designs are shown at the bottom of this page for reference. Many of the designs were also applied to shapes that are not shown below.





Morten wiring a lamp for the photographer, while trying to smother a chuckle! One of Lotte's paintings hangs in the background.





107



102



106



104



*105



*103



202



203



*201



*301



E1 WHITE
*701



SHADE: E1 WHITE
BASE: 809
CELADON

DR. CHARCOAL
809
LAVENDER

E2 BEIGE
309
BONE

E2 WHITE
312, 324
SAGE



Lotte Lamps Timeline

1956 - First lamps produced, Models 100, 200, and 500. Production in Oak Ridges, Ontario.

1960-1964 - Models 300, 400, and 600-900 are introduced. Production expanded to the US.

1972 ca - Models 1000, 1100, and 1200 introduced.

1972 - Model 200 Obsolete (due to poor Stability)

1979 - Model 1000 Obsolete (production problems)

1983 - All remaining models (1300-1900) are in Production.

1997 - Bostlund family sells business. Production is scaled down and moved to Ohio, where the lamps remain in production today.

