

# Easels For Sale!

In addition to creating displays in your showroom, use these items to increase your bottom line.

by Anne Vazquez

A recent episode of “Treasure Makers,” a television show on the Home and Garden Television network (HGTV), featured a segment on making an easel using a garden trellis. Although the demonstrator was using an item intended for outside use, the easel was being designed to display artwork inside the home. The use of easels in interior decorating is not new; however, it is a trend that’s increasing in many homes and offices.

Throughout history, easels have most often been used by artists for works in progress, but today they are used to display items in many types of settings. While easels were most often relegated to an artist’s studio in the past, the tendency for people to allow themselves more individuality and eclecticism in their surrounding interiors has increased the use of easels as a way to display artwork and other treasured items.

This is not to say that displaying artwork on easels is new to interior design. In David Barquist’s book, *American Tables and Looking Glasses*, the role of the easel in homes in the early years of the United States is discussed. “Ornamental easels for

displaying paintings or prints in domestic interiors were made in America as early as the first quarter of the 19th century...” Barquist adds that, “the form did not become common until the rapid proliferation of furniture displaying artwork during the 1870s.”

In today’s market, easels are available in a variety of materials, including metals, woods, and acrylic, making these age-old items a viable option to creatively display artwork and other items. And styles run the gamut from contemporary to traditional to funky to rustic.

Retailers in many industries use easels as selling tools to display signage about store specials or, perhaps, to direct customers throughout their showrooms. In a custom frame retail shop, easels are often used for these same purposes. However, here, easels are germane to the merchandise and can be found holding a framed piece of artwork. Large models set on the floor can hold framed items of significant dimension and weight. Smaller models are used to showcase more diminutive pieces.

In addition to the display advantages for the retailer, these easels can also be sold to the

customer. With this in mind, take care to aesthetically match up a framed piece with its easel. If a customer wants to buy the framed piece, and likes how it looks with the easel, you can sell both pieces at once. You can capitalize on this by making it clear to customers that the easels are for sale.

Tabletop easels are also an eye-catching way to display smaller artwork both in your showroom, and once in your customer’s home. When a framed 5"x7" photo, for example, is backed by a stand-alone easel that complements the artwork and framing, the piece becomes more “important” in its environment. Easels can be used to create vignettes on tabletops, mantles, and virtually any other surface. By displaying a variety of easels in your store, you can give customers decorating ideas and encourage add-on purchases.

The ability to move easels around with relative ease can make them desirable in both your store and the customer’s home. By showcasing the versatility of these items you will not only keep your showroom displays fresh, you will also be inspiring customers with new ways to display their favorite painting, shadowbox, or treasured photo. ■