

Australian Furniture
Weekly Times Column
By Warren Joel

Over the last few years antique furniture has been on a gradual slide, but there is some hope for the collectors. Good quality Australian furniture is still sought after and collectable.

How do I know if it is Australian or English?

There is no simple one line answer to this question, but I will give some points to look out for. The timber used will be a strong pointer to the object's origin. By far the most common timber used in Australian furniture is Cedar. Cedar is very similar to Mahogany but more a reddish brown timber. Cedar is a much softer timber than most other furniture timbers, so see if you can make an impression on the underside.

There are many other timbers used in Australian furniture. My favourite timber is Huon Pine, with a rich honey yellow background and fine bird-eye grain. A good piece of Huon Pine will sell for 3 or 4 times the same item made in an English timber. Other Australian timbers include Blackwood, Blackbean and Ash.

The design of the piece of furniture will also be a strong pointer as to where it was made. Our Antique Australian Cedar furniture tended to copy the English designs, but often with a twist. This will be much harder to pick as the differences can be very subtle.

One of the strongest areas of collecting is Australian furniture of the 50's and 60's. Local makes like Grant Featherston and Schulim Krimper are in great demand. If you have a Krimper dining room suite from the 1960's it is worth many thousands of dollars. Featherston chairs have now been reproduced as their popularity and value has increased. If you can afford it collect the originals; they will be a good investment.

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Warren is a third generation auctioneer and valuer specialising in Art, Antiques and Collectables, accredited by the Commonwealth in 2002 different areas of collectables.