

Cast Iron Furniture
Weekly Times Column
By Warren Joel

byjoel

Often over-looked, prodigiously copied and collectable. What I am referring to is the style of furniture coming out of the Victorian period made of cast iron. These became enormously popular during the heyday of the Victorian furniture fad through the 1980s and 1990s.

The furniture comes in many varying forms including tables, chairs, umbrella stands and hall stands, just to name a few. Much of this furniture has ended up outside in the weather and may now be looking very much the worse for wear as the painted finish will have long deteriorated and the rust starting to show. The tables and chairs because of their base material being cast iron were a favourite to be used outdoors.

One of my favourites is the lovely cast iron hall stands from the same period. There are a couple of stand-out features that you should look for, being anything of Australian motif, especially kangaroo, emu and tree fern. Many of these were made in the UK for the Australian market. Another value add element will be who made the piece. One of the best names to look for is Coalbrookdale (foundry in the UK). If one of your pieces bears this name it will very much be a collector's item.

The value of these will be determined by the overall condition, signature, if any, and the decoration. The small wine table and pair of chairs that have been left outside for many years will only bring a few hundred dollars. Repainting and cleaning up the old set may add another hundred or so to value, provided you didn't paint it in hot pink! At the top of the range will be the Australiana decorated hall stands, umbrella stands, chairs or settees that will bring thousands of dollars.

You need to be very careful that you have the original cast iron as there have been many modern aluminum replicas made over the years. The give-away for this is simply to pick up the chair, or in the case of the cast iron, not pick it up because it is too heavy.

Next week: Time To Look At The Insurance.

Free Valuation for Weekly Times readers.

Byjoel will do a free valuation of your collectables via email. If you send a photo and description of your item to valuations@byjoel.com.au I will access the item and respond.

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Warren is a third generation auctioneer and valuer specialising in Art, Antiques and Collectables, accredited by the Commonwealth in 35 different areas of collectables.

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