

What's Worth More The Glass Or The Contents?

Weekly Times Column

By Warren Joel

byjoel

While toasting Christmas at my father's place I paused to consider whether it was the nice wine I was drinking (not too much) or the glass it was served in that had the greater value.

There are many of you who would not give a second thought to what the wine was served in, but hidden out there are some wonderful and quite valuable drinking glasses. So what makes a glass collectable and valuable while most glasses are worth very little?

This can be broken down into several different and quite separate areas of collecting. At the top of the collectors' market are the wonderful 18th and 19th Century wine and Champagne glasses. Many of these have the most beautiful hand engraved decorations and scenes cut into the body of the glass, and these can sell for thousands of dollars. Just below these on the collection scale are the tall air twist stem glasses from the same period. Depending on the detail in the stem of the glass and the finer details of the drinking bowl, these sell for almost as much as the engraved glasses.

As the wine glasses get to the mid to late-19th Century most of the glasses are parts of sets of table glasses. This is where the maker of the glass starts to come into play - with names like Stuart, Webb, Baccarat and Lalique making some of the finest suites of table wine glasses. As with most areas of collection fashion has also played its part in what type of glass we want to drink out of and even what we drink. If you think back to say the 1920's or 30's the Champagne glasses that were popular had quite a wide and shallow bowl, but today we want to drink the same Champagne out of a tall flute. And not too many of you are having a liquor out of those very small glasses. To get a decent price for a suite of modern table glasses they need to be a good brand and have more usable glass than the older fashion designs.

And then for most of us there is the everyday wine glass, or vegemite jar that works just fine, and has almost no collectable value.

Next week: Ivory In The 21st Century

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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