

To Restore Or Not? That Is The Question
Weekly Times Column
By Warren Joel

byjoel

I am often asked the question - at what point do you restore an item or do you leave it in its original condition? This is a simple question, but there are many parts to the answer. Now the first thing we need to understand is that as a collector of antiques we may want our items looking old rather than new. My personal view is that I don't want my collectables looking like a new pin, but I also don't want them look tired and "un-loved".

Let's look at a few items as an example of what I am talking about. First the silver plated tea pot that has lost its silver coating. If you walk past it everyday and think to yourself "I must get that fixed" then it is time to get it fixed. Will the re-plating affect the value of the item, not by very much. Now if the same tea pot is sitting in the bottom of the sideboard and has not seen the light of day for 20 years, let alone used or cleaned, then save your money. Why spend the money on something you just don't use any more.

Restoring say the dining room table will be very much along the same lines as the tea pot. If every time you sit at the table, and that is more than twice a year, you need to cover it up because it is in such bad condition then it is time to get it fixed. With the table we need to choose a restorer that understands antique furniture so the French polishing can be sympathetic to the age of the table. What we don't want is the fine antique table coming back from the restorers with the high gloss mirror finish.

So will the new French polish add value to the table? If we have the fine antique table with the good original finish then it will be worth the most, but not far behind will be the same table with a good restoration.

In summary, if the look of the item is bothering you to the point where you won't use it, or even worse it is hidden in the bottom of the sideboard then it is time to get it restored. But spend that little bit more and get it done properly and you won't be disappointed with the result.

Next week: Trading On The Net

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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