

The Future of Antiques
Weekly Times Column
By Warren Joel

There have been many questions asked in recent times about where collecting and antiques are going, and what their future is.

Firstly, what is an antique and what is a collectable? An antique is technically any item that is over 100 years old, with the exception of textiles that only need to be 50 years old. Collectables are everything that is collected, so antiques are collectables just like match box toy cars, or glass ashtrays.

I have seen the price of the classic antique Victorian Mahogany table drop 50% in less than 5 years and the matching chairs and sideboards are not far behind that drop. With the current economic outlook I need to look hard to find any area of collecting doing very well.

Now, is this to do with economics or life style, or is it a combination of these two elements? If I look at how we choose to live today it is not in the formal lounge and dining rooms of a traditional house. We want to live in the informal living spaces or family room that has become the centre of family life. The formal table just does not work in that space. Now before all of you with that mahogany table put them out for the hard rubbish collection, there will always be those who do want the traditional spaces within a home. Maybe it's time to buy that table?

What I am seeing is that collectors are looking for better quality items and fewer items. The very top end of both the antique and collectors' market is very strong. This is well demonstrated by the Australian art market at the moment, where the top end continues to grow but below that prices are static.

Next week: The Tea Ceremony.

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 hwtvaluations@byjoel.com.au I will access the item and respond.

Warren Joel

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