

A Beginner's Guide to Antique Collecting

The reasons for collecting antiques can be as varied as the people who collect them. Some people first become interested in collecting as children, collecting anything from baseball cards to dolls, coins, stamps or even insects. Others don't begin collecting until their adult years. That interest may be prompted by some significant event, being given a family heirloom or from a desire to preserve elements of our past.

But the one thing all these people have in common is that no matter what they have chosen to collect, it's fun! Enjoying the pieces one has collected can be very satisfying, but it can't compare to the thrill of the hunt and the fun of finding a treasure.

Collecting can be a great hobby, but there is an advantage to collecting antiques over something like matchbooks or souvenirs. Antiques appreciate in value. By learning to buy, sell and even trade wisely some people have been able to turn a hobby into a successful business. But how can someone move beyond collecting for fun and begin to build a collection that has value? The key to building a collection that has value, especially antiques, is knowledge. Learn everything you can about the antiques you are collecting. Not only will it add to your enjoyment, but when you learn to buy, sell and trade from a position of knowledge you will be able to build a modest collection into one of real value.

When starting a collection, it's important to do your homework. When you begin shopping for antiques armed with knowledge, you are in a better position to spot a bargain or avoid making a purchase you may regret. Because the world of antiques is so broad, it is advisable to limit your collection to a specific area. No one can be an expert about every type of antique. That will allow you to learn about important manufacturers, recognize rare specimens, and most important for beginners, know how to spot reproductions.

Beginning to learn about antiques can be as simple as making a visit to your local library. There are a multitude of excellent books available about every conceivable category of antiques. However, two sources of information novice collectors may overlook are antique dealers and collectors. People who deal in antiques for profit or for pleasure enjoy talking about them. Antiques are one of their passions. Visiting antique shops and antique shows will not only allow you ask questions and learn from experts but it can be a fun way to spend a day or a weekend.

Once the "collecting bug" has bitten you, how do you decide what to collect? Simply collect something you love – something you are interested in. That makes learning about the items you collect all the more enjoyable. As you learn more about these antiques and their value, you will begin to learn how and where to shop for bargains. Being able to buy and sell to make a profit may not be your primary goal for collecting, but it may help you finance your hobby and enable you to increase the value of your collection.

In your hunt for antiques it is also important to buy quality, not quantity. Owning a few truly fine pieces is always preferable to owning many mediocre pieces. That may mean you may have to start small and gradually build your collection, but quality pieces appreciate faster and will build the value of your collection more quickly. When buying antiques you should avoid pieces that are damaged or repaired. They may be cheaper but they won't appreciate as much or add value to your collection.

When you search for the unique rather than the common, you will find that the more rare the antique the more it appreciates. This is another reason knowledge is so important. With enough skill, you may be able to recognize rare or valuable pieces less knowledgeable collectors might overlook.

Although they can be excellent sources, antique shops and antique shows aren't the only places where you can find valuable high quality antiques. People have made some great finds at flea markets and yard sales.

You may also find a wide range of antiques at auctions. But remember, if you go to an auction it's doubly important to know the value of the pieces you're bidding on. It's easy to get caught up in the excitement of the auction and end up spending way too much.

Finally, in your search for that special piece you have been searching for don't forget about internet auction sites like Ebay. Thanks to the internet it's possible to find just about anything.

Whatever you decide to collect for whatever the reason, enjoy the hunt. Bargains and interesting pieces can be found everywhere.

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About the Author

DC Riggott Inc. specializes selling authentic [architectural church antiques](#), [liturgical artifacts](#), and [relics](#) from around the world.

