

# Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Antique Dealers (But Were Afraid To Ask)

As told to The Observer  
by Frank and Marymarie Riegals

## HOW DO YOU AVOID GETTING GYPPED?

If you don't know what you're buying, know your antique dealer.

## DO DEALERS GO TO GARAGE SALES?

"Smarties" -- or small time operators -- might make the rounds and then hold garage sales of their own. We go sometimes at the request of a good customer and "wind up pricing for them."

## HOW MUCH OF SO-CALLED ANTIQUES ARE REALLY JUNK?

Plenty. But remember, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

## DO YOUNG PEOPLE BUY OLD THINGS?

"Hippies" do -- they buy the junk items because they're inexpensive. Young married couples on strict budgets do the same thing. But it's surprising how creative some of them are with some of the stuff people call junk.

(The Riegals have a room off their main showroom they call the "junk" room. Browsing through, this reporter found many usable household items still in good condition and reasonably priced.)

## CAN YOU DICKER WITH ANTIQUE DEALERS?

Some. We have a "dealer" discount and a "friendship" discount. Haggling -- or getting the dealer to come down in his price -- will depend largely on how business is and has been.

## DO DEALERS HAVE CONSCIENCES?

Good shop dealers do. If you want customers to come back, you're honest. "But we make mistakes, too."

## WHO SETS THE TRENDS?

Magazine editors with help of interior designers through articles and pictures.

## WHAT'S 'BIG' NOW?

Tiffany lamps are very popular.

So are hump trunks. Round tables are still in demand, but old picture frames and milk cans "have had it."

## DO DEALERS COLLABORATE ON PRICES?

No. Usually each dealer sets his own price, depending on the item and his expenses. Curiously, if a dealer has an item that he, personally, is particularly fond of, it will be priced high. This proves he's still got the "disease" that got him in the business in the first place. (A chuckle here)

## CAN YOU BE A SENTIMENTALIST AND STILL BE A DEALER?

Not if you want to stay in business.

## WHAT SINGLE QUALITY MAKES A GOOD DEALER?

Antique "intuition" -- knowing what to buy. A discernment that you're born with. Either you have it or you don't. You can't acquire it. It takes too long and costs too much.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF "ANTIQUÉ-ITIS?"

(Mrs. Riegals answered while he listened)

When you tell your husband not to buy you anything for your birthday or Christmas -- you'd rather have the money. Then you spend the gift money on more bric-a-brac when your basement is already filled and there's no room in the garage for your car.

"The joy in antiques is in the buying and the discovery -- not in the selling," she says with sigh.

## WHAT DO YOU DO THEN?

Open an antique shop like we did.

## ANY ADVICE?

Sure. Don't turn up your nose at reproductions. If you can't afford the real thing, buy the less expensive reproductions -- then hang onto them. They're the antiques of tomorrow.

(The Riegals even carry a small display of reproductions to illustrate their point and also "to help us from making mistakes.")



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