

# GARAGE SALES

## Recognizing Antiques

Garage sales are a great way to score antique items without paying antique store prices.

However, antique stores usually come with a staff skilled at sniffing out fakes, meaning you're much more likely to be getting an actual antique.

At garage sales, flea markets and other sales, it's up to you to make sure you're paying an antique price for a genuine antique and not a skillful reproduction. Here are some tips for identifying an actual antique from the experts at the DIY network.

### TELLTALE SIGNS OF AGE

A real antique should display some signs of age. Look for separated seams, uneven joinery and signs of years of usage. This could include water stains, marks, nicks and dings, uneven corners, scrapes and other signs of every day use. Hardware, if it's original, should show the patina of age and may be worn shiny from use. While



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you're looking at it, old pieces of hardware, such as the drawer pulls, will all be slightly different from each other. More modern pieces are machined, an even though they're artificially aged, will still look exactly alike.

If the piece has drawers

take them out and flip them over. Antique pieces will have irregular dovetail joints. More modern reproductions will show the even perfection of machine joinery. Also look for single-slot screws, consistent sprayed-on coloration and square nails. Square nails are

older and indicative of a true antique, while a sprayed finish is more likely on a reproduction.

### MAKERS MARKS

While you've got the drawers out, shine a light around and look for any identifying

marks the manufacturer may have left on the piece. If you're lucky, it may also include the year. Sometimes, if the piece was shipped, you may also find shipping information that can help you narrow down when it was made.

### GETTING AN APPRAISAL

Once you get your piece home, you might consider having it appraised. Make sure to pay an appraiser a cost per piece, DIY Network says, rather than a percentage of the item's worth. Else the appraiser could have incentive to bump up the price.

Worth Wise Appraisers says that before you contact your appraiser, you should have a plan for both the item and your appraisal. Are you just curious or are you using the appraisal for something like insurance? Let the appraiser know all of this information going in so they can give you the best service possible. Before the appraiser arrives, tag what you want appraised with colored sticky notes and gather all the information you have about the items. This can include canceled checks, receipts, invoices, certificates of authenticity, restoration reports and more. Have a space cleared out for the appraiser to work and be available to answer questions during the process.

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### BUYER'S TIP

#### Think Like a Retail Store

If you suspect that a piece isn't a true antique, don't immediately take it out on the seller. Chances are, they didn't do a close enough inspection themselves and believe they have a true antique. Instead, point out what you see and explain why you have your doubts as part of the price negotiation process.

## AD SPACE