

GARAGE SALES

Defining Vintage

Vintage is a word we're seeing everywhere these days. Vintage fashions, housewares, fabrics and more are all over the marketplace. Garage sales, estate sales and thrift stores are capitalizing on the trend. But what is vintage? Let's learn some terms.

WHAT IS VINTAGE?

According to the dictionary, vintage means a collection of contemporaneous and similar people or things, or also a period of origin or manufacture, such as furniture of 1920s vintage. It also means old, recognized and enduring interest, importance or quality. In other words, it's a classic.

In practical terms, what vintage means is that, most importantly, the item is old. But it's not so old as to be antique. It should speak to the era in which it was produced, like bellbottoms in the 1960s or shoulder pads in the 1980s. It should also mean that the item labeled as vintage exhibits the best qualities associat-



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ed with that era. It should be an accurate representation of that era. Vintage pieces are often collectible and are generally more than 20 years old.

VINTAGE VS. ANTIQUE VS. RETRO

We've talked about vintage

being old but not antique. Antiques are generally more than 100 years old and also may have a certain historical value. The difference between vintage and retro is less defined, but can generally be summed up in when the item was made and how it's used.

Vintage items were created in the period, used in the period and represent the period.

Retro pieces can be new or made later, but mimic the traits of items from a certain period. They may combine one or more trends to come up with a certain look. They

were not made or used in the period they proclaim to portray.

ADVERTISING

If you've got real antique items that are more than 100 years old, then antique is the word to use. Be prepared, however, when pricing and negotiating, that you may attract buyers who really know their stuff. Know yours as well. For true antiques, it may be well worth your while to engage an appraiser and the services of a sale house.

By advertising vintage items, you're letting people know that you are selling things that were made and used in that time period. Buyers won't expect things in perfect condition, but they will expect you to be honest and price accordingly. If you're missing pieces or accessories, be upfront about that and price accordingly. You should know something about how and when you acquired the pieces, but it's OK if you really don't know. Be specific, if you can, about the time periods of items you have.

If you don't know for sure that you have vintage or antique items, go with the word retro for your ad. These items may be worth a little less, but they may also be in better shape or with more safety features than vintage items.

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SELLER’S TIP

Got Vintage? Say So.

If you’ve got antique, vintage or retro items in your sale, say so. Be specific about dates, periods, labels or design movements. Like all garage sale items, make sure your vintage haul is cleaned up, with all the accessories and manuals you have for it attached.

AD SPACE