

GARAGE SALES

How to Shop for Antiques

Everyone seems to have a different definition of an antique. The dictionary tells us that antique just means an item is valuable because of its age, while other definitions say 100 years or more. What's true across the board is that antiques bring a unique character to your home.

BEFORE YOU SHOP

Know what you're after before you even leave the house. It can be easy to get overwhelmed and purchase too much or, even worse, the wrong thing for your space. Keep your overall vision in mind as you peruse the wares. Make a list or a sketch of your space to take with you as you shop so that you stay on track.

Shopping for antiques also requires a little more preparation than your ordinary garage saling trip. Antiques tend to be priced a little



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higher than your average garage sale goods, so you want to make sure you're getting the real deal. Make an antique shopping kit to help you make sure you're getting an authentic antique. Include:

- Cardboard boxes, tie-downs, bubble wrap and blankets to protect fragile items.

- Measuring tape to make sure it'll fit in your space (and your trunk).

- Poncho and umbrella in case of rain.

- Wet wipes because antiquing can get dirty.

BEING NICE WILL GET YOU DEALS

While you're shopping for

antiques, remember that haggling is the norm. Make sure when you enter a sale that you greet the vendor nicely and act courteously while shopping their wares. That way, if and when you negotiate price, you're starting out in a good position.

Begin the negotiations by asking the seller if that is their

best price on the item and if they would be willing to go lower. If not, be polite and tell them that the price isn't in your budget right now and move on. If an item has flaws, point them out nicely by asking them if they've noticed it and then ask if they'd be willing to lower the price in light of it.

Vendors may be more willing to haggle in the afternoon or towards the end of the sale when they're thinking about how many items they'll have to take back with them. When you make an offer, have the exact amount you're offering in your hand and ready to pay.

BEWARE OF FAKES AND REPRODUCTIONS

Beware of reproductions and fakes when shopping for antiques. There are some tricks you can use to make sure what you're getting is the real deal. Look for sterling silver marked with "9.25," "Sterling," "Sterling 925" or "S/S." It may be on the clasp or underside of a piece. If you shine a flashlight through porcelain, you should see it shine through. Make sure you check each item thorough for pests, such as bedbugs in upholstered pieces and check the joinery on wood and pieces of furniture.

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SELLER'S TIP

Research Items You Plan to Sell

Just like buyers should study up on what they plan to buy before the buy it, research the items you have for sale to make sure the price you're asking is fair. Sometimes, you may be well off on the low end, so make sure you do your due diligence. If an item turns out to be very valuable, consider selling it through a reputable antiques dealer instead of at your yard sale.

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