

Top 7 Antiques and Collectibles That Are Selling Now

What's "in" now?" Astor Galleries' October "Top" list reports on 7 antiques and collectibles that are currently in demand and selling fast. Hint: Sleek and "modern" are in; clunky and "brown" are out.



1. Costume jewelry is the most popular item sold at shows. Vintage is more affordable than new, but pieces marked with makers' names like Miriam Haskell, Hattie Carnegie and Trifari sell for more now than in the last 10 years. Modernist silver jewelry is hot, especially Mexican pieces by William Spratling and American pieces by Art Smith. Prices are in the thousands of dollars. Look for pearls, long chains, enamel bangle bracelets and anything with big colored stones, like large pins and cocktail rings. Good diamonds from the 1950s are down in price; good rubies are up.

2. Studio pottery. Twentieth-century American art pottery has been catching eyes and higher bids. Since the 1970s, art potteries like Rookwood and George Ohr got the most attention, but works by smaller, not-so-famous potteries are growing in popularity and getting good prices. Some late 20th-century studio potters: Beatrice Wood, Peter Voulkos, Otto and Gertrud Natzler, Edgar Littlefield, John Mason, Henry Varnum Poor, Antonio Prieto, Herbert Sanders, and Frans Wildenhain.



3. Vintage purses and scarves. The luxury secondhand market, a phenomenon that started only 10 years ago, is now a multi-billion dollar industry. Some pre-owned accessories are selling for more than new. Look for Judith Leiber, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Hermès, Coach, Vera and Gucci.



4. Fifties' furniture, not "brown." Today's buyers are on the hunt for blond and light wood pieces from the 1950s, '60s and '70s – sofas, chairs, tables and desks with sleek design and clean lines. Oak and clunky is out. Anything marked Eames,

Saarinen, Bertoia, Nelson, Wormley, Robsjohn-Gibbings, Finn Juhl, Herman Miller or Knoll is in demand, but unmarked and less expensive midcentury pieces are also wanted. Fast-selling accessories that complete "the look" include 1950s pole lamps, floor lamps and table lamps, metal wall hangings, and iconic plastic chairs.



5. Space memorabilia. Baby boomers were at an impressionable age for the early flights and moon landings and are snapping up items with historic value – pins and patches, photographs and magazine articles from early launches through the space shuttle flights, especially when signed. Toys, models, postal covers and artwork are also popular. Higher prices are paid for things that have actually flown in space and they go into orbit for items that have gone to the moon.



6. Hot Wheels vehicles. Hot Wheels have been hot since 1968, when they were introduced to compete with Matchbox cars made in England. Collectors favor and pay more for cars with "Redline" tires (tires with a red circle on the outside rim, used on vehicles until 1977). Cars in their original blister packages sell for hundreds of dollars and some have sold for over a thousand.



7. Banks, mechanical and "still." They're more than in. As major collections of mechanical banks are being sold, prices are high and going to established collectors. But less pricey tin banks are attracting new, younger collectors.



So if you're looking for what's hot, pass on your grandmother's figurines and head for her vintage rings and brooches. Say no, thanks, to the mahogany corner cabinet but consider the midcentury modern desk. And don't ignore the toys – they are also going up in value.