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COLLECTOR'S NEWS

SPRING 2011-3

This is part three of our mammoth Spring Newsletter concluding our brief history of Hampshire Antiques Ltd. from 1981-2011. We are showcasing our small collection of Chinese antiques accumulated over the past few months. As many of you are aware, Chinese antiques are the big international collecting story and have breathed huge new life into the general antiques market. Should any of you have any that you no longer enjoy, this is the time to sell. Please contact us and we will be happy to give valuations for you on single items or entire collections.



Another H.A. celebration! to r Grace Lin
computer whiz & party bartender, Sherry Yu
super sales girl and Robin at Kobe Steak House.

Thirty Years On. A brief history of Hampshire Antiques 1981-2011.

– Part 3 –

By the mid 2000s our sales were slumping. A whole generation was contributing to a declining market by not buying additions for their collections, or even worse still, dying on us. This was particularly evident in the market for Victorian antiques as many younger people were not interested in them deeming them fussy and old fashioned and not practical for modern day living. They might take them under duress through inheritance or as cool gifts but they weren't wildly enthusiastic to the extent of going to support antiques dealers by actually buying anything like this. So much more tougher times again unless we changed our focus. This came in a surprising manner through the sudden influx of wealthy immigrants from mainland China who, like the nouveau riche the world over now and in past centuries, wanted to buy things that looked like they cost money. So out with the brown furniture and in with the lashings of inlay and ormolu, anything richly decorated especially with gilt and, of course, their old antiques that we took away from them through their two centuries of civil war and turmoil.



CHINESE HAMMERED STERLING SILVER COVERED BOWL

A Chinese hammered Sterling Silver covered Bowl with small hatch fliptop to lid. 6.5" 857 grams. Early 20th cent. Signed 李王職 (Li Wang Zhi)



STERLING SILVER CHINESE EXPORT TEASET

A Sterling Silver Chinese export Teaset (3) with floral decoration. Signed Shanghai maker. 1083 grams.

A PAIR OF CHINESE PORCELAIN DEMI-TASSE CUPS & SAUCERS

A pair (from a set of six) Chinese Porcelain Demi-Tasse Cups & Saucers extolling the virtues of the good life. Circa. 1940+
\$85 each.



These mainland buyers have rejuvenated the west side real estate market in a big way to the point that we must be one of the few places in the world to see houses going up and up with seemingly no end in sight. This has had unforeseen consequences for us in that we have lost old Caucasian customers forever. They have taken huge cash offers for their homes, left town and gone away largely never to be seen by us again. We don't see an end in sight to this situation as there are now two hundred million middle class Chinese in China with pots of money looking for a safe haven to put it in. Lots will keep choosing Vancouver. Local decorators are having a field day if they can crack this market and there are signs of more sophisticated buying from some of these new residents as they discover western fashions in furnishings for the first time. There is still sometimes a large cultural gap though. Inordinate amounts of time have to be spent explaining the function of many pieces which by no means will result in a sale. As they often really don't understand things, they cover their lack of knowledge by trying to get things at firesale prices. Luckily for us, their kids are often educated here and if they're along or one of our Taiwanese girls are present, it is much more of a breeze dealing with them when you've got someone who understands mandarin. For us, this is a must market that has to be cultivated and developed.



AN ENGRAVED STERLING SILVER ICE BUCKET.

An engraved Sterling Silver Ice Bucket. 9.5" high incl. handle. 389 grams.
Japan. Early 20th century.

Just when we thought things might be picking up again we were, along with everyone else, subjected to the great credit crisis banking crash from those crooks on Wall Street. Collectors and dealers are individuals who are usually pretty canny about looking after and investing their money wisely but no-one could dodge this one and everyone got clobbered. 2009-10 were dreadful for many antiques dealers. Prices for some general antiques fell back to what they cost when we first opened thirty years ago and, even at giveaway prices, were not exactly flying out the door. Luckily, we had seen the writing on the wall and vacated our do-nothing, expensive store on Granville Street to take residence in an office warehouse complex on the southern west side at a fraction of our former rent to concentrate on the serious customer wherever he or she may be. This, in hindsight, was a very smart move.

LARGE CHINESE PORCELAIN QIANLONG VASE

This is a very large Chinese hand painted Porcelain Vase decorated with lotus flowers on a blue background. It bears the Qianlong Mark but we believe it to be a twentieth century copy say circa. 1930-50 as it came out of a Canadian estate. Height: 20". China. Copy.c.1930-50. \$4,500



The Great Recession internationally temporarily stalled prices for everything even great Chinese pieces. But the top end of the market is largely back and thriving but the middle market has largely evaporated for us and seems unlikely to return anytime soon. Silver and gold are on everyone's mind but we have not seen a stampede into the store to buy it unlike the last boom thirty odd years ago. This strikes me as a bizarre situation especially when late last year I went around weighing our silver pieces. We had old price tags on sterling spoons for instance that were saying \$35 each but the melt value was \$40 (more now) and no-one was cottoning on! We are now seeing investors, as opposed to collectors, buying into this market.



A PAIR OF CHINESE EXPORT PORCELAIN PLATES.

A pair of Chinese Export Porcelain Plates. 18th century.

Minor edge chipping. 9" diameter. \$495

We are now into 2011 and I'm feeling a trifle more optimistic about the economy and our future as an antiques dealership. 9/11 and the Great Recession has forced us into making fundamental changes in the way we operate the business and more receptive to new ways of doing business like joining 1stdibs.com to reach new buyers as our local custom has declined so much. I feel we will look back on the early 21st century as a golden age for accumulating many general antiques because of their availability which in turn is all due to a lack of demand. When you see 200 year old silver items turn up in thrift shops, it doesn't get any better than this for buying. We, though, have to concentrate on the things that sell and sell quickly and forget the rest. This is often wrenching as we still have fond memories of buying and selling carriage clocks, fine porcelain, fall front desks and Victorian landscape paintings and now are learning about Chinese antiques to carry us through the next five years or so before that bubble bursts.

A CHINESE STERLING SILVER KETTLE

A Chinese Sterling Silver Kettle with gold inlay to lid and body. Signed.

1038 grams. 9.25" high incl. handle. Early-mid 20th century



A PAIR OF FABULOUS STERLING SILVER & ENAMEL CABINET SPOONS.

A pair of fabulous Sterling Silver & Enamel Cabinet Spoons. 7.25"

long. Maker: Peter Hertz, Copenhagen who was a silversmith to

the Danish Royal Court. Circa. 1900

What about the next thirty years? Well, we've got to hang around in order just to make some real money! The older you get the more you know so longevity is definitely the key to a successful antiques dealership. I don't see ever slowing down as I enjoy the business so much and meeting the people that I do. From a financial point of view it would be difficult anyway as self employed people don't have access to company pensions! I'm not too sure I know the answer to the question oft asked me "Do you think the general antiques market will ever come back?" It all depends on fashion promotion as there is always money to be spent for certain things. Fashion really is everything. People will go crazy for it when they want it and, when they don't, you can barely give the stuff away. For instance, who would have thought that teak furniture from the seventies would rise so successfully again from the dead? We have seen in the past the reaction to certain magazine articles and celebrity endorsements so if it gets written up or raved about in the mainstream media, the telephone won't stop ringing, the computer will crash through an overload of emails and they'll be lined up outside the door eager to buy. What a happy thought!



A CHINESE PORCELAIN

A Chinese Porcelain hand painted & enamel Planter with peacock decoration. 11" x 8.75" x 4.5" high. 20th century (Minor chip to enamel). Signed 寺川 (Si Chuan). \$495



A CHINESE FAMILLE ROSE FOOTED BOWL.

A Chinese famille rose footed Bowl. Daoguang mark. (Restored chip) 7" wide, 4.5" high. \$950



CHINESE STERLING & JADEITE TEA STRAINER BY CHIN

A very ornate Tea Strainer in Sterling Silver with two dragons writhing around the rim. The ornate handle is carved jadeite. Signed: Chin Sterling. China. circa. 1920-40s. \$595