

Restoration

Selecting a restoration specialist



By DiAnna E. Tindell

DiAnna Tindell is an internationally trained restoration specialist and the founder of Tindell's Restoration Studios, a school for training in restoration. She is the author of a book on restoration soon to be published. Check her web site at <http://www.amn-mall.com/biznet/tindellsrestore>. Articles discussing the restoration of

all kinds of collectibles will appear regularly in later editions of Antique Trader Weekly. These articles can be collected and retained to build a great reference guide book. Your comments and/or inquiries are welcome. Please write to "Restoration" c/o Antique Trader Weekly, P.O. Box 1050, Dubuque, IA 51004-1050.

Have you ever had an unfortunate experience with the restoration of a special collectible? Or perhaps you've had an item that was in need of repair but you weren't sure where to take it.

The most important factor to consider is whether a professional restoration can be done without further damage to the collectible. A qualified restoration specialist should be able to complete an invisible repair without drilling, sanding or removing any part of the item's original body. In the event that you receive your restored collectible and it does not meet your expectations, therefore, the work should be reversible.

How do you go about locating a reputable restoration specialist? There are many sources, including *Antique Trader Weekly*, other related publications, collectors' clubs, web sites and restoration supply magazines. Most competent restorers are known by their work and the complimentary "word of mouth" that results.

Once you have located a few, which one should you choose? It would be preferable to find a restorer in your area to avoid shipping and long-distance communications. This, however, is not the only factor to consider. Inquire about their years in business, check out referrals, look at their backgrounds, training, experience and, most of all, their efforts to stay current with

the latest products and technology available. It is an added plus if the restorer has had considerable experience with your type of collectible. Personal contact or direct telephone communication with the restorer would also be helpful. A professional restorer should consider historical research, obtaining the match if your item is one of a pair, and many other resources to perfect the needed repair. If requested, the client should be able to obtain documentation from the restorer that will explain the restoration in detail.

If your item requires new parts, an explanation of what techniques and materials will be used may be helpful. You would want products such as the paints, pigments or dyes tested for fading, non-yellowing and durability. The item should retain its original resonant tap or ping and any translucency. The finish should be brushless and/or hand-painted as needed to accomplish an invisible repair. Inquire about how the metallic areas will look. Is the restoration detectable under a black light or x-ray?

When should you expect the item to be completed? Consideration must be given to how much restoration is needed for completion. In addition, keep in mind that any popular restoration studio will be busy. In many cases, it may be normal for a restoration to take from six months to as long as two years. If you develop a growing concern about the delay, some professional restorers will mail you



Shown below are the shattered pieces of a 19th-century Old Paris vase that was ultimately restored. The front of the restored vase is shown above, left, and the restored back is shown directly above.

a photo showing the work progress on your collectible. If your telephone and/or mail inquiries are being ignored, there may be some justification for concern.

Of course, cost is also a relevant factor. The old saying "you get what you pay for" just might be true. A quality professional restoration studio may have a minimum charge of \$30-\$75 to consider a small simple chipped area, for instance. If you locate one that is less expensive and has a faster turnaround, it may be that they are just getting started. If the restoration involves some complex processes, it is customary to leave an advance deposit. Some situations will require an approximated cost range with minimum to maximum charges. If your item is of great value, you may want to discuss the availability of insurance. ❁

