



RING ROAD ANTIQUE CENTRE

ANTIQUÉ & COLLECTABLE TERMS EXPLAINED

Acanthus A large leaf pattern used as a popular decorative motif from a plant native to the Mediterranean region. Used in classical antiquity and revived during the Renaissance.

Acorn An ornament of wood or metal resembling an acorn. Mainly found in Jacobean furniture as finials on chairs and bedposts.

Air Twist A technique of producing a spiral pattern in the stem of a glass by stringing out an air bubble in the glass.

Amaranth A deep, violet-colored wood at the heart, otherwise known as purple wood. Also called, violet wood, purple heart, tananeo and saka. The wood was used in 18th century France, sliced for decorative veneers and marquetry.

Armoire A large French ornamental cupboard or wardrobe, usually with much character, decorated with elaborate ironwork. French for "beautiful wardrobe".

Art Deco A style of decoration and architecture that emerged in the 1920's and 30's, characterized by bold geometric and rectilinear shapes and the use of man-made materials, such as plastic and steel.

Art Nouveau The highly decorative style of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Art Nouveau is characterised by natural forms and flowing lines.

Arts and Crafts Movement Refers to the loosely-linked group of craftsmen, artists, designers and architects, in the late 19th century, who aimed to raise the status of the applied arts to that of the fine arts, and committed to hand-crafting, as opposed to machine-production.

Ball Foot A spherical foot on some furniture, chests, tables, etc. Also called a bun foot in England and sometimes gripped by a claw.

Baluster A post or support of a specific bulbous like shape, for a handrail, such as a bannister.

Barley Twist A form of turning wood, popular in the 17th century, resembling the spiral shape of traditional barley sugar.

Baroque A style in art and architecture developed in Europe, principally Italy, from the late 16th to the early 18th centuries, typified by elaborate and ornate scrolls, curves, and other symmetrical ornamentation. Fashionable in England from 1660-1730.

Bisque Or biscuit ware. A French term for porcelain fired without a glaze.

Blue-and-White A term used to describe white porcelain painted in underglaze blue.

Bone China Porcelain made of clay (kaolin) mixed with bone ash. Invented in England by Josiah Spode in the 1790's.

Bracket Clock An early type of clock (17th century) that was placed high up on a wall bracket to allow the weights to dangle and not touch the floor. Now also used to mean a mantle or table clock.

Britannia Metal A silver-white alloy of tin with copper, antimony, and sometimes bismuth and zinc. Used in the manufacture of much early tableware.

Britannia Standard The first silver mark, the Leopard's Head Mark indicated that the piece was made of Sterling Standard (silver of 92.5% purity). In 1697 the standard was raised from 92.5% to 95.8% which is known as the Britannia Standard, and the figure of Britannia replaced the Lion Passant. Sterling was reintroduced in 1720 as an alternative to Britannia. The two standards have remained in use ever since.

Burr Walnut A highly decorative type of wood veneer produced from the large malformations made when an irritation or injury forms a contorted and gnarly mass of dense woody tissue, usually at the base, of the walnut tree.

Cabriole (Leg) A type of furniture leg, characteristic of Queen Anne and Chippendale periods, that starts off with a bulbous upper half and tapers downwards into an ornamental foot.

Cameo A technique of engraving in relief on a gem, stone, or shell, especially one of different coloured layers.

Carat. A unit of weight for precious stones, equal to 200 milligrams. 2. A measure of pure gold on a scale of 1 to 24; for example, 12 carat is 50% pure gold.

Cartouche A paper scroll-like tablet used either to provide space for an inscription or for ornamental purposes.

Chapter Ring The outer ring on a clock face, usually circular, that carries the hours and minutes, and can be painted, engraved or attached.

Chasing The technique of decorating metal (silver) by engraving or embossing, by using a blunt punch to create the design.

Clock Garniture A matching three piece set of clock and two vases or candelabra, made for the mantle shelf.

Cobalt Blue A blue pigment consisting of a variable mixture of cobalt and aluminium oxides, used for producing blue-and-white early porcelain. The only colour that could withstand the high firing temperatures.

Crackle A network of fine cracks on the surface of glazed pottery, china or glassware, caused by differing expansion and contraction rates of the material. When done on purpose, it's known as Crackleware.

Craquelure A pattern of tiny cracks on an old or deteriorated painting or its varnish, or the 'crazy paving' effect on pottery caused by differences in expansion and shrinkage rates.

Davenport A small writing desk with drawers and a hinged shelf to write on. Popular from the late 18th and throughout the 19th century.

Delftware A style of tin-glazed earthenware, usually blue-and-white, originally made in Delft, Southern Netherlands and also in England during the 17th and 18th centuries.

Dovetail A fan-shaped carpenter's joint formed by interlocking one or a row of such joints, seen especially in Georgian furniture.

Dry Point Engraving A technique of print engraving in which a hard steel needle is used to incise lines in the metal plate (usually copper).

Dumb Waiter What you get if you don't give a tip! No, seriously.... A portable serving table for the dining room, with two or three revolving tiers, designed to hold condiments, sauces and after dinner delights.

Earthenware Ware made from a variety of coarse, porous, baked clays, such as dishes, pots and tableware. Fired at around 1200° C.

Egg-and-Dart A decorative carving or moulding common in classical architecture and in cabinetwork, consisting of a series of egg-shaped figures alternating with dart, anchors or tongue shaped figures.

Electroplate Usually of silver, an electro-chemical process whereby a base metal is covered with a thin layer of another metal. Developed in the 1840's.

Emboss To mould or carve a design or pattern, in relief, by hammering and punching the surface of metal, paper, leather etc.

Enamel A smooth, glassy, usually opaque, protective or decorative coating baked on metal, glass, or ceramic ware. Applied enamel separated by strips of metal is called Cloisonné, whilst hollowed-out areas filled with coloured enamel is known as Champlevé.

Escapement A regulating mechanism in a clock consisting of an escape wheel and anchor that provides periodic energy impulses to a pendulum or balance.

Escutcheon An ornamental shield shaped object usually used to protect around a keyhole or the edge of a keyhole lining.

Faience A kind of fine, tin-glazed earthenware, usually decorated with colourful glazes.

Fake Also known as forgery. An object which has been modified in order to mislead and pass the object off as genuine or something it isn't.

Finial Any ornamental part of an object that is placed at the tip or end of an arm.

Forgery The crime of producing something counterfeit or forged with a view to receiving financial gain.

French Polish A hard, shiny, wood varnish consisting of a solution of shellac dissolved in methanol. The finish produced by this varnish on a piece of furniture.

Fretted An object patterned with lines or banding resembling a fence, trellis or lattice.

Fusee A grooved cone-shaped pulley on old style clocks in which the chain is wound, ensuring the mainspring pulls evenly on the workings as its strength declines.

Gate-Leg Table A drop leaf table with a pivoting leg on the frame which supports the leaf in use.

Gesso A type of plaster of Paris and glue suitable for complex carving on a wood base, and as a surface for painting. Often seen gilded on ornamental picture frames.

Gild To cover with a thin layer of gold foil.

Glaze 1. The smooth shiny coating fired on to an earthenware, stoneware or porcelain object. Coating may be coloured, opaque or transparent. **2.** A transparent coating, such as varnish, applied to the surface of a painting.

Guilloché An ornamental border with a repeating pattern of interlaced bands. Can be single, double or triple and formed to repeat the design along its length.

Hallmark A mark used in the UK to stamp gold, silver, or platinum objects that meet established standards of purity. Enables anyone to accurately know the where, by whom and when an object was made.

Hard-paste Porcelain Any porcelain made from kaolin and feldspar first used in China during the Tang dynasty.

Impressed Mark A pottery mark such as a manufacturer's design or initials stamped into soft clay, before firing.

Ironstone Ironstone china is a hard white earthenware, slightly transparent but very strong. It was first patented in 1813 by Charles James Mason as a cheap alternative to porcelain.

Jardinière A large, one or two piece decorative stand or pot for plants.

Jasper Ware A type of fine stoneware invented by Josiah Wedgwood and used as a base for the raised white classical figures associated with Wedgwood products.

Kakiemon Ware 17th century Japanese porcelain, distinctive by its vivid colours and decoration of birds and plants. Highly regarded by Europeans and widely copied in Europe during the 18th century.

Knop The often decorative knob or boss, as on the end of a spoon, or the bulge in the stem of a glass.

Lead Crystal A type of glass whose ingredients include lead oxide, making it softer to cut and engrave, and giving it a black tinge when held up to the light.

Lustre Ware An opalescent, metallic shiny glaze on pottery and porcelain, caused by the inclusion of silver, copper, gold or platinum.

Maiolica A type of richly coloured and decorated pottery that is enamelled and glazed. Brought from Majorca, Spain to Italy in the 16th century.

Majolica A type of brightly coloured, deep moulded pottery, made chiefly in the 19th century, in imitation of maiolica.

Marriage The joining of two otherwise unrelated parts so as to form a more useful whole. Usually said of furniture. Most often the union is a disappointment to the antique world.

Marquetry Inlaid decoration of variously coloured wood veneers in wood, ivory or the like, used chiefly in furniture design.

Meerschaum A compact white mineral found in the Mediterranean area which can be carved when wet. Its uses include fashioning pipes and building stone.

Meissen A city in the Dresden district of East Germany, famous for its porcelain manufacture, known as Meissen Ware, and also known as Dresden China. Discovered the secret Chinese formula for hard-paste porcelain around 1710.

Neo-Classical A revival style inspired by the art and architecture of ancient Greece and Rome, characterized by order, symmetry and simplicity of style. Developed in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Netsuke Originally made of a root fragment, a netsuke is a small toggle of wood or ivory, often elaborately carved, used in Japan to fasten a purse or pouch to a kimono sash. An art form that is highly prized in modern times.

Okimono Small, finely carved Japanese ornaments usually of ivory or bone.

Ormolu Originally gold or gold leaf used for gilding furniture handles and mounts. Later, any of several gold coloured copper and tin or zinc alloys resembling gold in appearance and used to decorate furniture, mouldings, architectural ornamentations and jewellery.

Paste 1. The name given to glass that tries to imitate gemstones. 2. Moistened raw clay used in making porcelain or pottery.

Patina A thin layer of colour, corrosion or texture which develops naturally on any hard surface over a long period of time. Examples are the browns and greens of copper and bronze as a result of natural or artificial oxidation.

Pilaster A rectangular column on a wall or piece of furniture.

Pinchbeck An alloy of zinc and copper used as an imitation gold, named after the English watchmaker, C. Pinchbeck (?-1732) who invented it.

Porcelain A hard, white, translucent ceramic made by firing a pure clay and glazing with variously coloured materials. Also referred to as China and Pottery.

pre-Raphaelite A society founded in 1848 by Rossetti and other English artists, to return to the style and spirit of Italian painting prior to the work of Raphael.

Quarter-veneered Four pieces of veneer, cut from the same piece of wood, so as to look identical, and then so arranged to mirror each other from its four corners.

Queen's Ware A cream-coloured earthenware with a transparent glaze. Developed by Josiah Wedgwood in the 1760's it became the standard domestic pottery in Britain. Also known as creamware.

Register Plate Part of a barometer that is marked with a scale against which the mercury level is read.

Rococo A style of art, developed from the Baroque, that originated in France (around 1720) and soon spread throughout Europe. Characterized by profuse or elaborate designs involving curves and scrolls imitating swirls, shells and leaves. Gradually surrendered to the Neo-Classical period in the 1760's.

Salt Glaze A glassy glaze given to stoneware by introducing salt into the burning kiln when the ware is fired.

Scrimshaw The sailors traditional art of carving intricate designs on whalebone or ivory.

Sèvres A fine porcelain made in Sèvres, northern France, also called Sèvres Ware.

Sheffield Plate Articles of tableware made from silver fused to a copper base and worked as one metal, developed around 1740. Now replaced by electroplating.

Skeleton Clock A clock encased in a glass dome in which all the outer covers have been removed to reveal the cogs, gearing and face. Came to England from France in about 1830.

Slip Coloured, liquid potters clay used as an adhesive for decorating or coating ceramics.

Soft-paste Porcelain Normally refers to European porcelain whose clay recipe makes the body more porous and the glaze less flinty.

Spelter Items, such as statues, made of zinc and treated to look like bronze were an inexpensive substitute during the Art Nouveau and Art Deco periods.

Stoneware A heavy, nonporous, hard pottery, fired at a high temperature (over 1200° C) and often glazed with salt.

Stretcher 1. A wooden frame upon which a painters canvas is stretched for an oil painting. 2. A horizontal piece of wood used as reinforcement between two other pieces so as to keep them rigid.

Transfer Printing A ceramic decorating technique perfected in the mid 18th century and widely used in mass-produced wares. Metallic oxide pictures on paper were laid over porcelain and fired, leaving the design on the porcelain.

Tulipwood Irregularly striped, ornamental wood of the tulip tree from Central America. Used for veneer, inlay and crossbanding in furniture.

Tunbridge Ware A distinctive woodware that was a speciality of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, England, for over two hundred years, from the mid 17th to late 19th century. Famous for its mosaic imagery, formed by gluing together rods of various coloured woods and slicing the block crossways to obtain a number of patterns.

Underglaze Applied to pottery before it is glazed. Said of a pigment or decoration painted, carved or printed directly onto a ceramic surface and then glazed.

Varnish An oil-based liquid used to coat a surface with a hard, glossy, thin, clear finish to furniture.

Vellum A fine parchment of kid, calf or lamb skin used for the pages and binding of fine early books.

Veneer A thin sheet of wood used as a finishing or surface layer on some types of furniture, to beautify an inexpensive carcass or to produce pictures, shapes or patterns.

Watermark A translucent design, a pattern or date, impressed on paper during manufacture and visible when the finished paper is held up to the light. Often a useful dating guide.

Ring Road Antique Centre
Ring Road, New Norfolk, Tasmania
P +61(0)3 6261 5880
www.ringroadantiques.com.au