
AUCTION NEWS

World famous Worcester collection part II auction marvel



Rare George Owen
reticulated lidded
casket

Perth-based wealthy analytical chemist Terry Wheeler and wife Tena have amassed a multi-million-dollar Royal Worcester collection unrivalled by any other in the world.

Last November, auctioneer Phil Caldwell sold 90 pieces from their collection in a highly publicised auction that saw a prized George Owen vase made for the 1893 Chicago Exhibition and valued at more than \$200,000 among the valued treasures to change hands.

From 11am on November 19, Part II of the Wheeler collection will go under the hammer in an online sale that features 16 exquisite George Owen pieces not seen by the public for many years.

“This is an unprecedented opportunity for collectors to acquire some of the best works Owen ever produced, as the Wheelers are now moving into a more compact Perth home and cannot take their collection with them,” Phil Caldwell said.

English potter George Owen (1845-1912) could best be described as the “Bradman of the pottery world” – referring to the Australian batting legend who died aged 92 in 2001, and who retired in 1948 from Test cricket with an almost perfect batting average of 99.94. No one has ever been able to match the deeds of either Bradman or Owen, whose pottery creations – exemplified by tiny piercings – have never since been replicated by any other artist.



George Owen ovoid body vase

The Wheeler collection almost never happened.

English born, they migrated in 1967 to the Western Australian mining town of Kambalda near Kalgoorlie to work for Western Mining Corporation.

A life-threatening severe dust allergy to their oldest daughter meant giving up the job and moving to Perth where Terry established an analytical laboratory for testing minerals that, by the time he sold it in 2008 to an international corporation, was the largest private mining assay company in the Southern Hemisphere.

Both husband and wife became hooked on Royal Worcester after they attended a Perth auction in the late 1990s.

Regular visits to family in England also took in porcelain sales at auction industry giants, including Bonhams and Christie’s, where they managed to outbid other collectors for the finest Royal Worcester pieces.

One of the George Owen-signed pieces now being offered to other collectors is an extremely rare jewel-like reticulated lidded casket (lot 40) with a catalogue estimate of \$30,000-\$60,000.

Two others are reticulated vases and covers (lots 34 and 35), the latter with two handles, estimated at \$30,000-\$50,000 each.

Yet another two-handled vase (lot 36) features a slender ovoid body with a pierced formal band between areas of honeycomb reticulation.

Equally famous at Royal Worcester is Harry Davis (1885-1970), and the Wheeler collection features several of his works including a unique two-handled lidded vase (lot 12) dated 1903 depicting two



George Owen two handled reticulated vase



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polar bears in an Icelandic Arctic landscape, with a \$40,000-\$70,000 estimate, and a large covered potpourri (lot 7) marked the following year – again with two bears in a similar setting. **Other significant Royal Worcester artists include** Charles Baldwin – a rare and superb seagulls painted 12-inch plaque (lot 3) typical of his marvellous work, along with a superb lidded two-handed potpourri painted with the rare subject of rabbits in a woodland setting (lot 54). Works by William Hawkins and John Stinton also are highly valued and a signed fruit, floral and bird painted exhibition vase (lot 69) is typical of the former’s creations – while lot 70, a signed monumental exhibition quality highland cattle painted two-handed vase, is an excellent tribute to the latter.

