

# New Is Not Always Better



My wife and I like antiques and have pretty much furnished our home with them. Perhaps 80% of the furniture we use is over 50 years old if not older. One thing we quickly realized is that certain concessions have to be made when you choose to populate your living space with old things. Like not expecting them to always work as they should.

We have a 100 year old storage cabinet with drawers that always stick... to the point where I don't remember what we've stored in two of the drawers because it's been so long since I've been able to open them. But the cabinet itself looks great and fits the space. And so far I haven't missed whatever might be in those two drawers so I really don't feel the need to replace it.

However, our dining room table which was bought from a Sears

catalog in 1905 was admittedly beginning to show its age. The table itself still looked in good shape but whenever we inserted its leaves to accommodate visitors, my wife was so embarrassed by their condition she needed to use a tablecloth to cover the flaws. (Which kind of gives me a clue as to how she'll be dressing me in years to come.)

Anyway, we started pricing out replacement dining room sets and the costs to get something of quality were exorbitant. So we just kept the old Sears set until we could figure something out. One day, at an antique auction, I spotted an old dining room set that was being put up for sale. Nice carvings, chairs looked great. And it was a drawer-leaf table – meaning it went from a 4 top to a 8 top by pulling out its built-in leaves. And they were in great shape... original to the table which means no tablecloth would be needed.

I looked at my wife who shrugged and said, "I don't think so." By this time, we'd been looking for over a year without finding even a potential candidate. I was excited by this find but my wife was not so I played it cool. I sat down and watched the auction.

The table came up late in the sale. Still looked good to me. My wife sat stone faced. The auctioneer opened the bidding. Crickets. No one wanted it. He dropped the opening bid price. Sounds of silence from the crowd. He looked at one of his partners and said, "Looks like I'm buying this one. \$100 to..."

I thrust my paddle in the air so quickly, I broke the sound barrier. Based on the expression my wife gave me, she must have heard it. But I bought the dining room set: One expandable table, six chairs, in near perfect condition, for \$100.00. It now sits proudly in our home as a table no one sits at... right near the cabinet that doesn't open and the clock that doesn't chime.

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