

Great Canadian Roadshow visits St. Catharines

By Harley Davidson, Standard Staff
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Daniel Ilmer, an antiques expert with the Great Canadian Roadshow, examines a German Vitessa Voigtlander camera, brought in by Joyce Knudstrup, who travelled from Cambridge, Ontario to attend the show and have a variety of items appraised. She also brought some jewelry and fine china. The camera was appraised between \$100 and \$200. (Harley Davidson/Standard Staff)

The Great Canadian Roadshow is in town at the Holiday Inn on Ontario Street until Saturday, offering people a chance to bring in their old items to see if they might have some value.

The concept is similar to the American TV show, Antiques Roadshow, but according to Max Smirnov, manager of the Canadian roadshow, they do things a bit differently.

They don't just appraise the items, they help people sell them — on the spot.

Smirnov says most people who visit the Canadian show end up leaving with a cheque.

"We look at the items, we authenticate them, we take some pictures, document them and then we e-mail them to people who specialize in those types of items," says Smirnov.

"We represent a database of about 2,000 collectors."

After that, those collectors e-mail back in real-time with the price they're willing to pay for said item. The show then matches the seller with the collector and if a deal is worked out, the roadshow writes a cheque to the seller.

Smirnov says the roadshow combines technology with the industry of antiquing, so instead of having 17 experts all on site, they have those experts all over the country and communicate online.

He says some of the rare items found so far this year in St. Catharines are Civil War (U.S.) guns, a 100-year-old accordion worth about \$5,000, a 120-year-old Georg Jensen sterling-silver teapot worth around \$2,700, and a 1.8 carat diamond worth more than \$12,000.

The show also does have experts on location, including a gemologist and antique experts.

“We have experts on location that specialize in a variety of fields, from personal property appraisers to gemologists, to musical instruments, war memorabilia,” says Smirnov.

He says not everybody who comes through is looking to sell their items though.

Instead, many just want to know information about different things their family has left for them.

One woman who came in Thursday had pictures of her grandmother posing with Queen Victoria, taken in a hotel her family owned over 100 years ago in British Columbia.

The 10-year-old show travels all across Canada, this being its fourth year stopping in St. Catharines.

Some broadcasts can be found online on the roadshow’s YouTube channel and sometimes on different U.S. networks, according to Smirnov.

The show is free of charge, though items sold are subject to a 15 per cent fee to the roadshow.

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