

PHONE BIDDERS CREATE AUCTION CARNIVAL BUZZ

One hundred and twenty phone bidders made life interesting for auctioneer Tony Philips as a total of more than 300 buyers crowded into Philips Auctions Malvern rooms for the August decorative arts and jewellery sales.

While having fresh stock and estate items is a strong selling aid, clearly defined provenance also helps with auction bidding. Such was the case with several items belonging to the late Air Commodore William Garing, the man acknowledged as the architect of a successful Allied victory against the Japanese in the Battle of the Bismarck

Sea during World War II. Resulting in an absolute rout of Japanese forces who, in March 1943 made one last attempt to re-establish their loosening grip on New Guinea by dispatching 6400 troops from Rabaul to their major garrison at Lae, the air/sea combat was devastatingly one-sided and regarded as the decisive aerial engagement of the war in the southwest Pacific.

The most outstanding Garing item was an 1850s mahogany Wellington secretaire chest which sold for \$15,579 on a \$3000 top estimate. Another Garing item was a Victorian miniature cedar chest of drawers that, estimated at \$1000, changed hands for \$5539 while a dedicated



silver salver incised with the insignia of Transport Command Royal Airforce he received on retirement fetched an impressive \$3000. Other furniture items with strong results included a Victorian and palisander breakfront wardrobe that sold for \$6900 on a \$3000 reserve.



An 1890s French three-piece clock set also impressed as buyers took the bidding to \$2077 on a \$500 estimate in what Tony Philips described as an atmosphere akin to a Melbourne Cup carnival.

"People like the excitement of an auction scene," he said. "They come to buy at a fair price believing these are genuine sales – not just old dealer stock that is being recycled."



Jewellery excitement

The excitement continued with the following night's jewellery sale when bidding for a jadeite pendant took off at an alarming rate from the opening gambit of \$500.

"Bidding went to \$3000 in \$1000 increments before it finally sold for \$4039," Tony Philips said. Another good result was a jadeite bangle that changed hands for \$2300 on a \$400 estimate.

At the end of both very successful auctions 79 per cent of decorative arts had been sold and 60 per cent of jewellery with many items selling well above estimate.

