

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Rare Dunhill Namiki pens a highlight at Bonhams](#)



Who knows if the pen really is mightier than the sword but, in the case of some of Dunhill's exquisite Namiki writing instruments, it can be a darned sight more expensive.

The Namiki factory was founded near Tokyo in 1915 to produce gold pen nibs, but a decade later its founders Ryosuki Namiki and Masao Wada patented a process to apply lacquer to pen bodies to protect them from becoming scratched and faded.

Shortly afterwards, they began decorating the pens using the ancient Japanese technique of Maki-e which involves dusting precious metal powder onto wet lacquer to create intricate images – an art form that captured the imagination of a man called Clement Court who was manager of the Alfred Dunhill boutique in Paris during the 1920s.

Court secured Alfred Dunhill the global distribution rights for Namiki pens, and the 'Dunhill-Namiki' name has come to be associated with some of the most valuable and collectable pens in the world.



Evidence of this will be seen at Bonhams' Distinguished Design sale this month, where a unique set of 12 original Namikis from the Alfred Dunhill archive will be offered in a bespoke shagreen box with a pre-sale estimate of £100,000 - 150,000. The barrels of the pens date from the 1920s and feature designs depicting

seahorses, goldfish, grasshoppers and orchids to name but a few. The remaining components have been fully reconditioned and new caps have been fitted.

The sale also includes two Namiki Emperor pens from 2008 and 2010 that are decorated respectively with Kingfisher and Turtle designs. Each is expected to fetch £45,000 - 55,000, with nine other vintage barrel Dunhill Namikis on offer at £6,000 - 8,000 apiece.



Collectors of classic Dunhill items will also be able to bid for a selection of the brand's famous lighters, including a 1950s version in the shape of a jet plane and four of the Perspex-bodied 'Aquarium' models bearing images of swimming fish.

The innate sense of retro chic that pervades here at the Classic Driver offices, however, makes us hanker after the matched set of Dunhill table lighter and cigarette box in heavily chased silver from the mid-70s. It's exactly what you'd have reached for on arriving home from a hard night of partying after dropping the keys to the Lambo' Espada on to your brass-framed coffee table, prior to enjoying a last Senior Service before bed.

Bonhams' Distinguished Designs sale takes place on November 30 at the Montpelier Street rooms in Knightsbridge, London, SW7. Telephone +44 (0) 20 7393 3900 or see www.bonhams.com.

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Photos: Bonhams

Gallery

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