
Antiquated love for the handmade – with Bentleys' Tim Bent

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From the moment you're buzzed through the door of Bentleys antique shop on Lower Sloane Street, you're instantly transported back to a time when everything was made by an expert hand and well-trained eye. And after meeting owner Tim Bent, you can see that he's truly in his element...

While showing us around the shop, Tim's eyes light up with every piece he sees and everything he says is spoken with such pride, as if he crafted each bit of 'kit' himself, describing them as "beautiful, incredible, perfect, fantastic, stylish, ingenious, amazing," and the list goes on. It's instantly clear that Tim is in this luggage game for the love of it.

School boy dreams



When asked how he got into this very niche market, he says, "It started when I was in school, actually. I used to deal in vintage clothes, particularly those of the Edwardian style — tweeds, Savile Row tailoring, very traditional, very British — and then I sort of got into luggage and accessories. It was my grandfather who gave me my first pieces of luggage — two big Gladstone bags. I was inspired from then on. I still even have one of those."

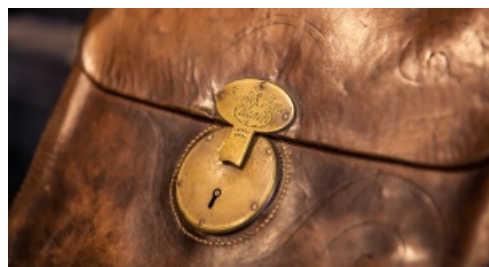
Finders keepers





With so many different pieces placed around the shop, it's difficult to decide which you want to learn about first, from the massive 1920s Louis Vuitton trunks and Prohibition-era cocktail sets to the Austrian decanters and newly polished World War II naval binoculars. To even find these pieces is a tremendous feat. "I cover a lot of auctions, but now, it's very rare that you actually find anything decent going through the sales. So, I tend to find more through a little group of dealers that operate in different parts of the country. Otherwise, I'm out on the road, going to all the antique shops. It's good fun — a sort of endless treasure hunt."

Inspired by legends



It's not just luggage the pulls at Tim's heartstrings — it's the rare, unusual, one-of-a-kind pieces, from Hermès driving gloves with built-in light indicators to candlestick holders made from sword hilts. Of course, the piece that instantly caught our eye was a bare-metal tether car displayed in the centre of the shop. Tim noticed and went on to explain: "This was a great tether car we bought. It's a copy of the W196 Mercedes Fangio and Moss had driven. And of the half dozen or so I've had over the years, this is the only Mercedes I've seen." Shall we test it out at our next visit, Tim?

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