

5 Top Considerations for Pricing Vintage Boats

Dennis Ryan of Antique Boat Center Shares the Top Five Factors That He and Other Classic Boat Aficionados Commonly Use to Determine the Dollar Value of Vintage and Antique Boats.



Antique Boat Center's 22,000 sq. ft. indoor showroom in Cincinnati, OH typically displays 60-80 vintage boats, offering a unique venue for understanding today's market for vintage boats.

Cincinnati, OH – October 18, 2010 – Many of today's antique wooden runabouts have survived fifty to one hundred years after they were built—changing hands from one generation to the next and sold or brokered at marine centers. That is why buying and selling these vintage runabouts can be challenging with respect to evaluation. As the largest sales and services center for vintage boats in the U.S., Cincinnati-based Antique Boat Center faces this challenge every day, watching the value of classic boat brands such as [Gar Wood](#), Lyman, Riva, Hacker Craft and [Chris Craft boats](#) increase in value by 5% per year over the last 20 years.

With this unique perspective on the antique wooden boat marketplace, Antique Boat Center's president, Dennis Ryan offers the following expert viewpoint on determining proper pricing with consideration of the five most important areas that establish a base value.

History: Who owned the boat and where was it used? A movie star or statesman may contribute to the value. A famous race boat, ride boat, water ski boat or a boat used in a movie will add points. Documentation and photos are critical to the authenticity of the perceived value.

Rarity: How many were produced or even how many still exist. Unique, single builds are very collectable. Supply and demand will impact the price.

Styling: Many early “woodies” were for function not fashion. The utilities could have a rough finish and Spartan appointments; set up to carry goods and passengers—not to win beauty contests. The upswept decks of the 20’s and 30’s, 1939 and 1940 Barrel Backs, as well as the fins with paint and chrome in the 50’s and 60’s, offered the same beauty and glamour of the automobiles of the day.

Condition: Generally speaking, condition is the largest price variable. A grey boat, even when rare, requires so many hours to restore that the value is often less than 10% of a boat in excellent shape. Boats that are water-ready tend to be easier to sell and typically sell in a shorter time. The quality of work performed is critical since a poorly restored boat will often cost more to restore than an original boat that is untarnished with improper fasteners, adhesives and finishes.

Current Market Prices: [Vintage boats](#) have price fluctuations like many other hobbies or collectables. Many models that were rare twenty years ago have subsequently had similar models restored; ultimately decreasing the overall sale price of that particular style of boat. At the same time, younger families with children can require open seating areas causing the utility style boat to become more popular, thereby increasing demand and prices. These cycles are normal and repeated over time.

It is always important to have a professional inspect your boat. A licensed surveyor or qualified restorer can help locate deficiencies, as well as confirm the quality of the antique or classic boat you want to purchase. Hull inspections, as well as engine/mechanical inspections, are generally money well spent, giving you peace of mind about your new “woodie”. Many buyers request a water test to learn proper operation of the vessel, launching, and retrieving and trailering. A qualified sales staff will help you with the water test.

About Antique Boat Center

Established in 1990, Antique Boat Center is one of the largest antique and classic boat sales/brokerage firms in North America. The company’s 22,000 sq. ft. indoor showroom in Cincinnati, OH displays 60 - 80 vintage boats for sale and includes a full service [wooden boat restoration](#) department for serving the classic and antique boat marketplace. For a quality wooden boat trailer, contact Antique Boat Center at 513-242-0808 or visit our website at:

<http://www.antiqueboat.com>