



NEWS RELEASE

World's largest private collection of Coca-Cola® advertising art
and memorabilia to become available to public;
80,000 pieces in collection worth \$10 million

ELIZABETHTOWN, Ky. – (April 27, 2011) It is the biggest and the best privately held collection of Coca-Cola memorabilia in the world. There are one-of-a-kind posters, rare serving trays, unique bottles, colorful jewelry, lighted signs, artistic clocks, antique delivery trucks, Santa icons and even the side of a barn. Altogether, there are some 80,000 items worth as much as \$10 million.

And it's not just memorabilia. It's arguably the best advertising art the world has ever seen. It's a collection that traces a large portion of U.S. history and includes early vintage pieces and iconic images. Who wouldn't want to get their hands on a piece of this collection – a piece of history?

Now, anyone can.

The Schmidt Museum of Coca-Cola Memorabilia in Elizabethtown, Ky., is divesting its vast collection which dates back to the 1800s and fills a museum and warehouse totaling 32,000 square feet.

"A big portion of our life has gone into collecting these wonderful, artistic pieces," says Jan Schmidt, who, along with her late husband Bill Schmidt, started the collection in 1972 when they went to an antique art auction and came home with a carload of Coca-Cola memorabilia. "We didn't set out to accumulate the world's largest (privately owned) collection. All we wanted to do was tell a story and put it on display."



This one-of-a-kind poster is from 1895.

The Schmidt family collection has raised the awareness and prestige of the art and craftsmanship that has gone into Coca-Cola merchandising and branding. The quality of the work is unsurpassed by advertising standards, and the sheer volume is hard to fathom.

While the Schmidts are proud of their collection and the way it's been showcased, it is time for a change. "The collection has become inert," says Jan, "and the way to keep it alive is to pass it on – to give others the opportunity to own and showcase the items they want."

www.schmidtmuseum.com/pressroom has more info and downloadable images & video for media use.



The Schmidt family will establish a foundation where the vast majority of the funds from sales will be used for benevolent purposes.

“This collection is the best of the best,” says Allan Petretti, author of “Petretti’s Coca-Cola Collectibles Price Guide,” which is in its 12th edition and is filled with 645 pages of Coca-Cola merchandise. “The Schmidts defined collecting. The depth and breadth of their collection is beyond incredible. They have the rarest of rare pieces. They have things from every era and from every category – clocks, posters, toys, trucks, bottles. You name it, and they have it.”



The Schmidt museum has the only complete collection of Coca-Cola serving trays. This is the rarest, dating from 1897.

Because Coca-Cola is perhaps the most well-known heritage brand in America, maybe even the world, the interest in the dispersion of the Schmidt collection will transcend antiquers and Coke enthusiasts, according to Petretti, who is working with the Schmidts to appraise each item and help with the dispersion.

The items of most interest will be sold at live auctions. “These will be events,” adds Petretti, “because the interest will be vast.” Plans are still underway for the first event, which is tentatively scheduled for mid-September. Each event will see about 1,000 items sold and will take place at the Schmidt Museum in Elizabethtown. Much of the collection will also be sold online in a typical bidding process or at fixed prices. Every item sold, no matter its value, will have a

commemorative tag explaining its origin and significance. It will likely take several years to completely divest the collection.

So, what are the most significant pieces, and what are they worth?

Two pieces stand out, according to Petretti, and each is conservatively valued at \$30,000 but could conceivably go for many times that.

One is a large, bright-yellow poster, circa 1895, that was designed to be in a soda fountain for about six months then thrown away. This poster, which is in immaculate condition, is the only one of its kind to survive more than a century. Like most Coke posters, it features an attractive woman with a beverage in her hand. It reads, “Drink Coca-Cola. Delicious. Refreshing. Cures Headache. Relieves Exhaustion. At Soda Fountains 5 cents.”

The other crown jewel in the collection is referred to as the “Victorian Girl” serving tray and is one of only two known in existence. It’s a circular tray, 9 3/8" in diameter, and is made of lightweight tin. It’s circa 1897 and is among the first-ever Coca-Cola tin trays. Over the years, Coca-Cola produced more than 200 styles of trays, and the Schmidt Museum has the only complete collection.



One of the largest items in the collection is an onyx and marble soda fountain made in 1893 for the Columbian Exhibition of the World's Fair in Chicago. It will be sold during the first auction event.

Richard Opfer Auctioneering will run the events. Known as a foremost authority on auctioning collectibles and toys, Opfer says the Schmidt collection will draw world-wide interest.

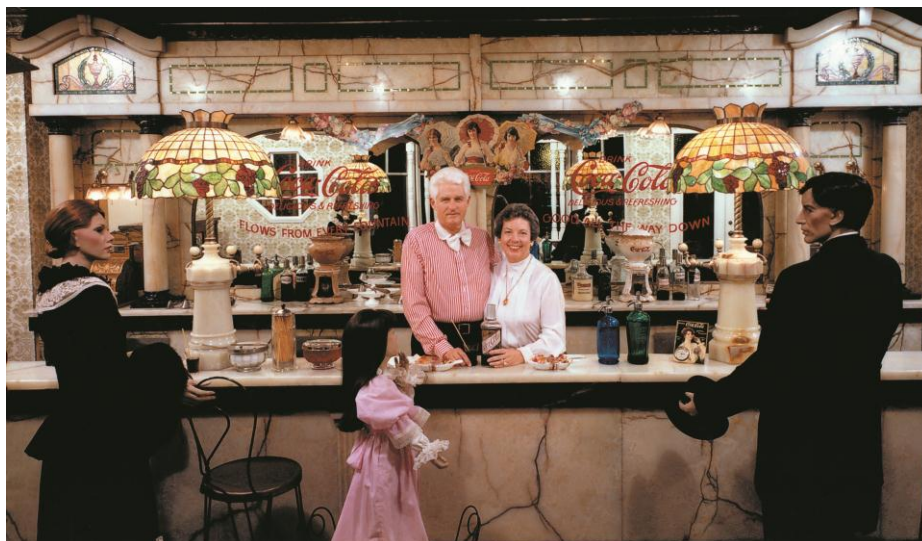
What triggered Jan and Bill Schmidt to become the most avid collectors? Coca-Cola has been part of the family business for generations. In 1901, Frederick Schmidt became only the fifth Coca-Cola bottler in the nation when he opened a plant in Louisville, Ky., at the corner of 9th and Main streets. In 1920, the franchise, which covered much of Kentucky and parts of Southern Indiana, was split into three areas with Luke Schmidt, Bill's father, taking over the Elizabethtown operations 50 miles south of Louisville. Larry Schmidt, Bill's son, became the fourth-generation president when he took over in the mid-1990s. The Schmidts later sold the franchise while the museum has remained.



Jan Schmidt has spent 40 years collecting Coca-Cola art.

In order to catalog all items and prepare for the sale events, it is necessary to close the museum. "It's a historic collection and an amazing legacy my parents have created," says Larry Schmidt. "It's been a part of the fabric of Elizabethtown, so this has been a difficult decision but it's the right one. It creates an opportunity for others to own a piece of history and it allows us to give back to the community."

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This soda fountain was part of the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago. It became a part of the Schmidt museum in 1976. Bill and Jan Schmidt posed for this photo in 1983. The soda fountain will be sold in the first auction.