

# SUTTON PLACE

*Social* 11.21



## A SUTTON PLACE THANKSGIVING WITH THE BYRNE-ROSENBERG FAMILY

Photo by Erin Silber

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# TALKING ANTIQUES WITH ADAM: What's Selling Right Now?

By Hannah Zwick

**F**or this edition of A Minute With, I spoke with Adam Zimmerman of Syl-Lee Antiques, which specializes in “convenient, confidential, and courteous house calls” for NYC and

Long Island residents seeking antique evaluations. Syl-Lee was founded 45 years ago by Adam's father, Gary, who named his business after his parents, Sylvia and Lee. The business has stayed in the family, now run by Adam and his sisters, Marion and Marnie. I spoke to Adam to learn more about Syl-Lee's history, services, and philosophy.

**Sutton Place Social:** Syl-Lee was founded by your father. What inspired him to get into antiques, and what was it like growing up with a family business?

**Adam:** My father had an art background — a bachelor of fine arts, and he was a bit of a painter. He could identify things that were good quality without having much background about them thanks to his art knowledge. Growing up with the family business is a lot of memories of going to antique markets and garage sales, traveling from Manhattan to Long Island to Massachusetts, to wherever my father was looking. That's how I was involved before I really got involved in the business myself. Now, running the business with my sisters, it's great to keep it in the family: we work well together; we complement each other.

**Sutton Place Social:** What's the home visit/evaluation process like?

**Adam:** We look forward to visiting people, whether it be because they're moving, redecorating, downsizing. In many cases, it's also working with the kids when their parents pass away. We look forward to helping them find a method to the madness; it's not easy when a loved one passes away and you suddenly have a bunch of stuff that you have no idea what to do with. You know, it's old stuff that your grandmother or mother told you was worth money, or it's just been in the family. You don't want to

make a mistake. So that's where we come in and we look around at everything and identify the items that are more important than others, more valuable than others, and have potential to sell. Sometimes even more importantly, we can identify the items that can be discarded, so you can get them out and move on to the next part of the process. Besides buying, we also assist with the auction process. If someone wants to auction items, we work with over 20 options besides the big ones in the city, so we can get your items to the appropriate auction if needed.

**Sutton Place Social:** Are there antiques you're particularly interested in? And any pieces that have been particularly memorable?

**Adam:** The items that sell well right now are definitely Chinese antiques. We also do a lot with mid-century modern furniture — that's always hot. As for memorable pieces, we assisted a client with a Russian painting that ended up selling for around \$180,000. She had an idea of what she had, but she didn't know what to do with it, so I was able to connect her with someone who specialized in that.

**Sutton Place Social:** What's something you think is important for readers to know about your business?

**Adam:** Because we deal with a lot of older people, we make sure to be very patient. Whether it's good or bad news as to how much a piece is worth, we want to share the evaluation with courtesy. Sometimes the kids will have us there to help: they might need someone to hold their hand through it, to tell Grandma that *yeah, this used to be worth some money, but right now, the antique market isn't what it used to be*. Explain that it's a lot of mid-century modern rather than traditional antiques that sells. A bedside manner, so to speak, is very important to my sisters and me. We make sure that even if there's nothing there, we want to acknowledge the sentimental value.

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