

Launched Today, The First Global Online Course on Asian Antiques

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London. November 14th 2016.

Award winning Internet company, MyAntiqueSchool (<https://www.learningwithexperts.com/antiques/courses>), has teamed up with Toma Clark Haines, CEO of the world's most acclaimed Antiques Touring company, The Antiques Diva & Co (<http://antiquesdiva.com/>) and Angela Somwaiya, owner of Paul's Antiques (<http://paulsantiques.com/>), Thailand who is one of Asia's most knowledgeable antiques dealers and is the head Antiques Diva Guide for Southeast Asia. The collaboration is to give enthusiasts, collectors and designers access to experts on buying Asian Antiques for the first time. Now wherever you live in the world, you can get access to Asian Antiques Diva Expert, Angela Somwaiya, through the MyAntiqueSchool online classroom, and receive personal tutoring in a vibrant community with other enthusiasts.

During the unique and collaborative online Asian Antiques course (<https://www.learningwithexperts.com/antiques/courses/asian-antiques>) Angela Somwaiya and Toma Clark Haines, 'The Antiques Diva™', take you on a journey through South East Asian antiques using on location video lectures filmed at Paul's Antiques and other exclusive locations in Bangkok. The subjects are then discussed and debated in the online classroom, with weekly assignments marked by Angela. Subjects covered include colonial era furniture, Burmese teak, lacquerware, hilltribe furniture, hilltribe baskets, temple relics, architectural items and Buddha statues.

The popularity of using Buddha statues in interior design is increasing to such an extent that the team has dedicated the whole of lesson two to Buddha statues and their varied mudras (hand positions). Angela discusses various Buddha postures (and which ones are rare), how to display Buddha statues in their new homes to show respect for their heritage and spirituality (e.g., when brought back for interior design purposes). Critically Angela also shares correct legal and culturally acceptable practices for exporting Buddha statues from Southeast Asia to Europe or the US. Finally, Angela goes on to reveal the best kept secrets on how to identify which region certain Buddha statues are from, and key characteristics which denote different style periods.

The Antiques Diva™ team gives you insights into other Southeast Asian statues including the pantheon of Nats, various Disciples, Attendants and Angels, as well as their meanings, positions, history and values. This lesson also touches on Mythical beasts, Hindu Gods and Goddesses, statuettes and folk characters.

In the final and fourth lecture, Toma Clark Haines and Angela Somwaiya cover the all important value of Southeast Asian antiques and how to price them.

Elsbeth Briscoe, CEO and Founder of MyAntiqueSchool commented: "The MyAntiqueSchool philosophy is that knowledge and history of antiques and collectables in some areas will be lost, as future generations read fewer books, and crafting of materials isn't always passed through to the next generation.

MyAntiqueSchool is a perfect digital vehicle to ensure that we preserve this knowledge, and connect people with true experts to keep our history, skills and craftsmanship alive. Asian Antiques is a popular market, with a clear need for access to experts worldwide, especially for the enthusiast and designer markets."

"MyAntiqueSchool has teamed up with world experts in the antiques and collectibles community so that enthusiasts, collectors and professionals, wherever they are, get the opportunity to learn from the best, including board advisor and investor, Joanna Hardy, known as Antiques Roadshow expert and lecturer at Christie's in London."

Other, specialist antiques courses with expert tutors on MyAntiqueSchool, include: Understanding Ceramics, Fine Jewellery, Upcycling and Art Deco, with more courses and tutors coming each month. The following expert antiques advisors are already involved in the initiative to become the world's first online education hub for learning about antiques and collectables."

Toma Clark Haines, CEO of The Antiques Diva & Co explained, "Our mission is to make European and Asian antiques accessible. Working with a team of 24 locally-based guides The Antiques Diva™ & Co takes clients on one on one customized antique buying tours in 14 countries in Europe and Asia. We translate, negotiate and ship antiques helping clients navigate the international waters when it comes to global sourcing. We are the leading resource for helping newcomers to Asia source antique abroad. In this course we examine what to buy and why in South East Asia."

Paul's Antiques Owner, Antiques Diva Guide and Asian Antiques Expert Angela Somwaiya said: "I'm thrilled to be sharing my knowledge and expertise gathered over 24 years of living in Asia with others in this dynamic format." It has always been my desire to increase cross-cultural understanding through the sharing of knowledge, and I believe that the future lies in the combination of cutting edge technology and the understanding and application of ancient wisdom. MyAntiqueSchool makes this combination possible and I'm so excited to be a part of it." Toma Clark Haines continues, "Our job is to be a cultural liaisons— to be diplomats of the antiques trade – giving our clients and students unprecedented access into the local antiques scene in each of our 14 tour countries in Europe and Asia."

The benefit of being able to learn online is that students get access to some of the most knowledgeable experts in the world, that otherwise they would be unable to meet. MyAntiqueSchool students receive weekly video lectures and are set optional assignments, on which tutors give personal feedback. They also have a downloadable guide, which can be printed off and kept, and access to the video tutorials for a year after the course has ended. Students interact in an easy-to-use online classroom where they can chat with other students from around the world who share the same passion they do. Course prices range from £100 for a taster course to over £1,000 for longer, more in-depth courses.

- Joanna Hardy (board advisor) - independent fine jewellery consultant with over 30 years experience including De Beers and Sotheby's, a NADFAS lecturer, author and regular specialist on Antiques Roadshow
- Judith Miller (advisor) - author of the Millers Guides, acclaimed broadcaster (Antiques Roadshow and others) and expert for MyAntiqueSchool
- David Rago - lead expert appraiser for the US Antiques Roadshow on PBS and Partner and Co-Director of 20th Century Decorative Art and Design Department at Rago Auctions in New Jersey (\$30 million annual sales)
- Tony Geering - up to half the arts and crafts furniture sold by Liberty in London has been discovered by Geering, mainly at big antiques fairs and obscure country shops
- Toma Clark Haines – founder of The Antiques Diva™ & Co, the worlds largest antiques touring company operating in 14 countries in Europe and Asia. Toma teaches from around the globe, Europe, Asia and the USA.
- Marc Allum – Antiques Roadshow Regular, Author, Broadcaster, collector and buyer for interior designers

To book a MyAntiqueSchool course, or to get on the waiting list for courses coming soon, see www.my-antique-school.com.

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Notes to Editors

MyOnlineSchool (<https://www.learningwithexperts.com/>), MyAntiqueSchool's parent company, was founded by Elspeth Briscoe (eBay, Skype). MyOnlineSchools serve students from over 50 countries worldwide, their most far-flung students come from Argentina, New Zealand and Indonesia. They have delivered thousands of hours of lessons to students and well over a million users have visited their sites. MyGardenSchool (<https://www.learningwithexperts.com/gardening>) and MyPhotoSchool (<https://www.learningwithexperts.com/photography>) have won The Good Web Guide Awards three times and are partnered with many highly respected industry leaders, such as The RHS, BALI, APLD, The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian and Mumsnet. In February 2015, MyOnlineSchool announced seed funding of nearly half a million pounds from a team of specialist institutional investors to help launch and develop MyAntiqueSchool.

Toma Clark Haines is the Chief Executive of The Antiques Diva™ & Co, the worlds largest antiques touring and sourcing company. As an American who has lived abroad over 17 years, it has been said Clark Haines is conquering countries faster than Napoleon. Working with a team of 24+ locally-based agents, The Antiques Diva™ & Co offers customized antique buying tours in 14 countries working with both the public as well as the trade. Her favorite part of her job is stocking clients antique stores, lecturing at furniture markets around the world and creating new trends in home fashions.

Paul's Antiques, which came under the ownership of Angela Somwaiya in 2008, has been a favorite among

diplomats, expats and collectors for over 20 years. Originally specializing in colonial era teak furniture from Burma, the shop has evolved to include collections from Thailand and all over Asia. It's in-house workshop is known for its sensitive refinishing and repair work that retains the original character and enhances the natural beauty of the pieces. In addition, custom furniture in Paul's Antiques own unique "style" can be ordered to specification.

