

When I first started delving into the world of eBay I was astonished by the sheer magnitude and variety of "stuff" people had. What was more amazing, was that there was someone out there, somewhere- that wanted to buy it. After two years of being in this business, I've seen many unique things brought through the door. Let's see, there was the Velocipede; a turn of the century one person railroad repair vehicle that looks like a motorcycle. There was also an Elias Howe/Singer sewing machine from the mid 1800's that wandered in. We've had numerous large collections of comic books, Western Story Magazines, designer purses, shoes and jewelry. We've had fly fishing poles, golf clubs, a pitching machine, musical instruments, china, crystal, cameras and electronics- I thought there was nothing left that could surprise me- until I met a Steiff collector.

First, a little background. Steiff is a German company that was first known for making stuffed bears. They openly attribute the early popularity of their bears to Teddy Roosevelt for inadvertently starting the "Teddy's Bear" craze that jump started their business in 1903. They then branched out to include farm and wild animals, fish and birds- essentially they make all types of stuffed animals- and do it quite well as they have been in business for 125 years. This being said, any toy company that has been producing product for over a century will inevitably have people who are collecting it.

When I first walked in to our client's home, I quickly noticed the five large elephants poised on the couch. What I didn't realize was that there were literally 1,000 pairs of eyes peering at me from various hutches, shelves and cabinets. As we were escorted upstairs, I became aware that there was no way an SUV could house the sheer magnitude of what we were facing. When we opened the door to the den it became quite apparent- sitting, standing and lying before us were seventy-five large sized bears ranging in weight from 10-30 pounds each- we were definitely going to need a Uhaul.

As I began carrying down the bears I realized just how many hours this woman had spent making her collection. To her it was a labor of love- a quest to gather as many pieces as possible with hopes to amass a pristine collection of quality and rarity. It was now my goal to do the collection justice. On eBay there are over 5000 active listings with the word Steiff in the title. It was my intent to find out what collectors were looking for when they bought these little critters- this is what I found.

The Age:

The Button:

The Chest Tag:

The Ear Tag:

It's true if you are an active collector of these animals you will likely be looking for the attributes listed above, but if you love animals in general, you may want to take a look at the Steiff collection. They are quite lifelike and I am sure anyone could find something to relate to. As for us here at the store, we are just finishing up with the last bit of bears, turtles, cows, dogs and cats from the collection. As overwhelming as this seemed on the onset, I am honored to have seen so many Steiff's in one home as I am sure that I will never again see a collection so complete.

Good luck and good bidding- ezAuctioning