

A Millbrook Treasure

By Claude Benchley

A visit to Red School House Antiques in Millbrook, NY, pleases the senses. Not only is there a fine, high-end inventory of early American and English country antiques from which to choose, but also these precious artifacts are beguilingly displayed. Proprietor Don Bergeron and his knowledgeable associate William Mitchell make one feel *simply at home*. "I've always felt that the comforts of home are what make life enjoyable and that you have to surround yourself with beautiful things, no matter what they are or what you pay for them. It's the overall experience that's important," remarks Don. The shop is an inviting affair—from the moment you enter all inhibitions are discarded as you experience these extraordinary and historically significant treasures.

Specializing in 18th and early 19th century furniture, decorative accessories and fine arts, Don and William travel worldwide sourcing and procuring to refine their inventory, as well as for their very long list of loyal clients, many of whom are serious collectors. "We have a clientele that always appreciates the finer things in life," Don says. "We try very hard to present what we think should appear in a client's home. And usually we're right."

Equally important are the novice or intermediate collectors who are always treated with grace and a generous dose of education and sharing of knowledge. "What I tell beginning collectors is that they need to make a choice about what they want and to have the inspiration to realize that

direction," Don says. "Everyone aspires to the top, but no one starts out there. Initially, you have to buy what you can afford, and then move up from there."

Don Bergeron's discriminating eye, keen sense of design (gained from 30 years experience as an interior designer and respected former member of the American Association of Interior Designers), and widespread understanding and knowledge of antiques, have established Red School House Antiques as one of the finest examples of early American antiques and decorative arts, and fine arts in the Hudson Valley.

The interior of the shop flows beautifully through a series of rooms within rooms as one might find in a cozy, well designed home. Don and

William's design aesthetic juxtaposes a 19th century oil painting by Susan Waters above an 18th century American Chippendale wing chair. One notices an impeccably preserved 18th century New York Sheraton four drawer bird's-eye maple and cherry chest or a set of eight Yorkshire spindle back 19th century country chairs. Early American candlesticks, wooden boxes, porcelain and extremely rare old paintings are carefully placed evoking a sense of history and beauty.

Our favorite antique shops are those we return to time and again, watching the collection change or seeing what treasure we had overlooked. Red School House Antiques offers a truly rewarding and elegant experience—surrounded by centuries' old rarities and antiquity and the charm and goodwill of Don Bergeron and William Mitchell. ❖



Red School House Antiques, 3300 Franklin Avenue, Millbrook, NY.
845.677.9786. Hours: Thurs – Sun 11 – 5 pm or by appointment.



Clockwise from top left: 17th century English court cupboard, circa 1620; 18th century early English cupboard, circa 1720; 18th century Chinese export large tureen and platter, circa 1780, Copeland Spode platters, circa 1920; 18th century Long Island gumwood kas, circa 1720; Early Hudson River Valley pair of portraits of prominent Newburgh family, oil on board, circa 1815; 17th century broadleaf oak refectory table with set of eight Yorkshire spindle back country chairs, circa 1800.

