

Rare J.H. Belter bed soars to \$201,250 at estate sale held Feb. 21 by Hal Hunt Auctions



A magnificent pierce-carved, laminated rosewood bed made by John H. Belter in the 1850s and one of only two known soared to \$201,250 at an estate sale held Feb. 21 by Hal Hunt Auctions in Northport, Ala.. About 350 people attended and 437 lots sold.

March 9, 2009 - [PRLog](#) -- (Northport, Ala.) – An exceedingly rare and magnificent pierce-carved laminated rosewood bed, beautifully crafted by John Henry Belter (circa 1850s) and one of only two known, soared to \$201,250 at a multi-estate sale held Feb. 21 by Hal Hunt Auctions. The bed was the top earner of the 437 lots that crossed the block in an auction Hal Hunt described as “an advanced sale for the advanced collector.”

The Belter bed was stamped (or embossed) in six places, with a patent date. It was pictured in the book, *American Furniture of the 19th Century, 1840s-1880s*. The only other known example is in The Brooklyn Museum. Overall, the sale was wildly successful, despite a generally poor economy. “There were some great bargains that might have brought stronger prices in better times,” Mr. Hunt said, “but serious buyers paid top dollar for the high-quality merchandise.”

Mr. Hunt said for the sale to be as successful as it was – around 350 people in attendance, in the dead of winter, in a sour financial climate – suggests that people are choosing to put their money into hard assets, like true antiques, instead of stocks and bonds. “The nice thing about quality antiques is, you can actually enjoy them while you own them,” he added, “and they almost always appreciate in value.”

Following are other highlights from the sale. All prices include a 15 percent buyer’s premium.

The Belter piece wasn’t the only bed sold. A walnut Victorian half tester bed attributed to Mitchells & Rammelsburg hammered for \$25,875; a two-piece walnut carved Victorian bedroom suite attributed to Alexander Roux rose to \$20,125; an 1850s New Orleans McCracken four-poster bed hit \$14,950; and a Mitchells & Rammelsburg pierce-carved high-back Victorian bed commanded \$10,925.

Period furniture dominated the day’s offerings. A spectacular three-piece mahogany Karpen parlor suite with griffins and dolphins reached \$48,875; a 9-foot-tall rosewood cylinder secretary desk with bird’s-eye maple interior, attributed to T. Brooks, commanded \$34,500; a heavily carved Black Forest cabinet reached \$25,875; and a French polished rosewood cabinet-base étagère made \$23,575.

J. H. Belter pieces climbed to dizzying prices. A rare, 10-piece laminated rosewood parlor suite in mint condition and in the Milwaukee pattern, gaveled for \$132,250; a rosewood dresser with serpentine laminated drawers, carved flowers and dresser boxes achieved \$92,000; and a laminated rosewood center table with carved flowers and grapes made \$48,875.

Also from J.H. Belter: a rosewood laminated tall crest sofa in the Tuthill King pattern went for \$34,500; a rosewood laminated recamier with fountain elms hammered for \$29,900; a rosewood étagère in the Rosalie pattern (84 inches high by 60 inches wide) crossed the block at \$27,025; and a rosewood cabinet base étagère (tall, at 93 inches high by 51 inches wide) went to a determined bidder for \$20,125.

Furniture by J. & J.W. Meeks also did well. A rare rosewood laminated pierce-carved parlor table in the Hawkins pattern changed hands for \$54,050; an 8-piece rosewood laminated pierce-carved parlor suite in the Hawkins pattern achieved \$46,000; and a rosewood secretary desk with maple interior topped out at \$17,250. Also, an 11-piece Horner Brothers carved oak dining room set realized \$34,500.

Fine art was offered. An unsigned 19th-century French scene with figures, attributed to Boucher, soared to \$6,900; a signed oil painting by William Anderson Coffin earned \$5,175; and a framed figural rendering by Giovanni Grignaschi gaveled for \$3,738. In bronzes, a 40-inch statue of double figures, signed by Faure de Brousse, made \$5,175; and a bust of Napoleon, signed by Columbo, brought \$3,450.

A nice collection of antique music boxes came under the gavel. An oak Regina changer with pierce-carved griffins with gallery top, in original condition, climbed to \$31,625; a Regina mahogany curved glass changer went for \$18,400; a mahogany Edison "Opera" with wood horn hit \$7,763; a Stella mahogany music box with drawer made \$5,750; and an oak Regina music box with table rose to \$5,175.

Oil lamps, electric lamps and gasolier chandeliers were offered in abundance. A rare matched pair of gasoliers hammered for \$14,375 each; a crystal prisms gasolier attributed to Cornelius & Baker lit up the room for \$10,925; and other gasoliers fetched \$5,000-\$10,000 each. A cobalt solar lamp, 30 inches tall, made \$5,750; and a collection of oil lamps went for hammer prices of \$1,000-\$4,000 each.

A handsome alabaster floor lamp illuminated the crowd for \$5,750; a gorgeous panel lamp with Art Nouveau ladies, 20 inches tall, realized \$4,025; a rare panel lamp with four graces overlay also hit \$4,025; a panel lamp with eagles drew a top bid of \$3,278; a 10-inch signed Pairpoint lamp shined bright at \$2,875; and a pair of Wilkinson leaded glass lamps with junk jewels brought \$2,990 each.

The star lot in a collection of antique Victorian art glass bride's baskets was a satin glass example with birds that flew away for \$6,325. An example with cherubs brought \$1,840, while other pieces in the group made \$350-\$1,000 each. Also, a sterling silver service by Sir Christopher Wallace commanded \$5,750, while services in the Love Disarmed and Butter Cup patterns brought \$6,325 each.

Vintage clocks chimed right on time. A rare oak hall seat with clock, in the original finish, fetched \$14,375; a superior inlaid case 9-tube grandfather clock, 103 inches tall, rang out at \$9,775; a fabulous 19th-century large cherub figural dore bronze clock with porcelain plaques earned \$8,050; and a three-piece Vernie Martin decorated clock set, signed Tiffany & Company, changed hands for \$4,025.

Rounding out the top lots, a Sevres porcelain vase with matching pedestal, plus a Sevres porcelain urn, sold for \$14,375; an extraordinary English sterling silver tureen topped out at \$12,650; a signed Tiffany & Company sterling top water pitcher brought \$3,680; a large over-the-mantel gold leaf trumeau mirror, 89 inches tall, garnered \$9,775, and a 12-foot-tall gold leaf rococo mirror made \$9,775.

Hal Hunt Auctions' next big sale will be held Sunday, May 3, beginning at 12:30 p.m. A preview is planned for Saturday, May 2, from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Hal Hunt Auctions is always accepting quality consignments for future sales. To consign an item, estate or collection, you may call them at (205) 333-2517, or you can e-mail them at halhunt@bellsouth.net. Hal Hunt Auctions will also purchase entire estate collections for cash.

For more information about Hal Hunt Auctions and its calendar of upcoming sales, log on to www.halhunt.com.

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Ken Hall writes pre-sale and post-sale press releases for auction houses, for a fee (\$250 US\$). He writes, submits and tracks stories for clients. Submissions are published in trade magazines, posted on industry websites and appear in local newspapers.

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