

BUSINESS

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Online auctioneer offers tag sale alternative

by FRANCINE NORMANN

With tag sale season fast approaching, auctioneer Barbara Bonhiver says she has a better plan for those hoping to turn their family treasures into cash while cleaning out their closets.

"Before you think about holding your tag sale, call me," said the vivacious Redding resident who has been an online auctioneer since 1999.

"I'll help you choose the best items to sell online and help you select which ones to take to a consignment shop. You'll avoid all the clutter and stress that goes into organizing a tag sale, make more money, and donate the rest of your treasures to an organization which will give you a tax write off."

Sound easy? Mrs. Bonhiver says it is not only easy but fun. Her business, Bonhiver & Company, housed at 32 Cannon Road in Cannondale Village, is an outgrowth of her own experience. She began an online search for a rare perfume in 1999.

Perfume found in minutes

"It was the perfume I wore during my engagement and at my wedding 20 years ago."

However, this long-cherished and discontinued perfume was nowhere to be found during a 15-year search through correspondences with perfumeries worldwide.

When she turned to eBay, Mrs. Bonhiver was able to find the remaining supply of the scent within minutes. And, she bought all the remaining bottles!

That was the genesis of Bonhiver & Company. She was soon managing auctions for friends and eventually for others who wanted to take advantage of eBay's worldwide reach but who did not have the time, technical resources, or interest to manage their own auctions.

Within a year her home-based business moved to her present site in Cannondale and she launched her Web site



Auctioneer Barbara Bonhiver of Bonhiver & Company in Cannondale helps clients sell items online so they are seen all over the world by individuals, collectors, gallery owners and businesses.

—Francine Normann photo

www.bonhiverandco.com — last summer.

Worldwide exposure

"When you sell online, your consignments are seen all over the world by individuals, collectors, and gallery owners and businesses who are searching and bidding actively against one another for exactly what you have. My goal is to fetch top dollar for my client's consignments and this reach allows us to meet this objective."

Bonhiver & Company handles every aspect of the auction. "I analyze the market for my client's item. I'll find out about the latest bid on Wedgwood Jasperware, for example, and work with my client on set-

ting a price. Any kind of identifiable hallmark or an appraisal helps set price.

"I present my client's auction in the best possible light using state-of-the-art digital photography and computer technology," she said in her comfortable conference room. "I write copy. I apply proven strategies concerning the timing and duration of my client's auction to assure that bidders see their treasure at the most active bidding times."

Mrs. Bonhiver then monitors the auction to handle bidders' inquiries, confirm the bidder's qualifications and reputation. "At auction's close, I process the winning bidder's payment and pay my clients promptly.

Our clients received 70% or more of the highest bid. I pack, insure and ship the item."

The firm sells fine jewelry, furs, watches, couture clothing and accessories, crystal, silver, collectible glassware, china, fine linens, textiles, fine arts, rare books and first editions. "We also allow merchants to auction hard-to-sell merchandise, unsold inventory or overstock which is a drain on their assets."

She said that the Internet "has revolutionized the world marketplace. For example, eBay invented a new industry, creating an exciting original paradigm for digital commerce.

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Bonhiver has online auctions

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With more than 10 million registered users and more than one million auctions being held daily, eBay is the world's largest online trading company."

There are many checks and balances, such as eBay's Feedback rating feature and Safe Harbor conflict resolution, which help to ensure the sale. Mrs. Bonhiver has been named an eBay "Power Seller" for her vol-

ume of sales and the quality of her service.

Active in The Junior League since she graduated from the University of California, Mrs. Bonhiver and her husband Gary are also active in the Wilton Chamber. She hopes to bring her expertise to help area non-profits turn their silent auctions into online auctions that are more profitable.

"There is so much opportunity online," she said.

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