

AUCTION NEWS



History abounds at Mount Macedon auction

A wealthy 19th century Scottish industrialist and Britain's wartime Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill's butler are forever inexorably linked through a recently sold heritage listed National Trust Mount Macedon home whose contents will be auctioned online from 11am Sunday May 22 by auctioneer Phil Caldwell.

William McGregor migrated to Australia and built the Gothic-style Victorian home at 49-51 Devonshire Lane in 1874, naming it Ard Rudah (High Promontory) as a reminder of his Highland roots.

With the help of Melbourne's Royal Botanical Gardens designer Baron Ferdinand von Mueller (who also designed similar spaces in several small towns throughout Victoria), McGregor linked the initial layout of house and garden before purchasing land nearby to build Ard Choille (High Hill).

In 1922, renowned early 20th century society architect Christopher Cowper (responsible for designing many of the period Hawthorn homes) bought Ard Rudah and converted it to a 100-square



manor house with seven bedrooms – one for each of his daughters – while also enhancing and expanding the existing garden features, now recognised as among the top 300 in Australia.

Around this time, Mount

Macedon was rapidly becoming a summer retreat for Melbourne's social elite and Cowper became instrumental in bringing electricity and other modern conveniences and major developments to the area.

Come the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and enter Sir Winston Churchill's butler Walter Meyer – brought to Australia as one of the organising cooks.

He fell in love with Mount Macedon and subsequently purchased Ard Rudah, converting it to a well-known guest house that operated successfully until narrowly avoiding destruction in the 1983 bushfires, which put an end to the popularity of the area.

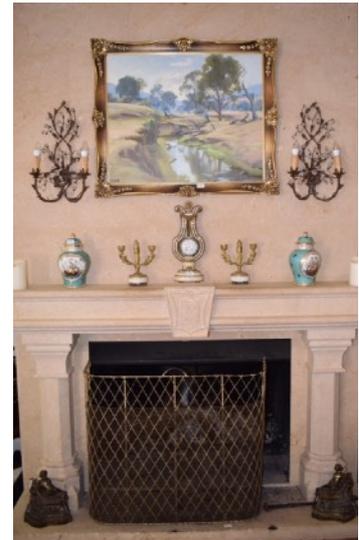
The present owners, heart surgeon Anthony Dortimer and his wife Jillian, bought the home in 2003 and totally renovated the house adding a large conservatory and family room.

To furnish their new premises, the Dortimers attended a Graham Geddes clearance sale and, with the help of Phil Caldwell, purchased many of the items offered in Sunday's auction.

Interior design was handled by internationally famous the late Stuart Rattle and architect Stephen Akehurst, prominent on the Mornington Peninsula and throughout country Victoria.

Auction offerings include decorator and antique pieces such as 18th century lowboys, sideboards, commodes and dressers.

Of particular note is an impressive banquet dining room with refectory table and an attractive set of French cane inset dining chairs.





Other highlights are a rare four-fold glass and gilded screen, 18th century English chinoiserie hanging corner cabinet, drum roll top cabinet and an outstanding large marquetry commode.

Among the porcelain and glass on offer is the finest and highly collectable Royal Worcester vases by leading artists George Owen, Harry Davis and Charles Baldwyn.



Antique timepieces include an 18th century mahogany cased grandfather clock, a palace size ormolu chateau clock set, a massive early French mantel clock and boudoir and salon examples.



Art works by Australian artists such as Arthur Boyd's Mentone Beach, 1939 should attract plenty of interest along with several Ernest Buckmaster paintings. Other major artists to feature include Sidney Nolan, Pro Hart, David Boyd, Roland Wakelin, Leonard Long, Charles Blackman and J.H. Scheltema. Overmantel mirrors and bronze sculptures are other attractions and the

auction also contains a comprehensive range of jewellery and watches such as a Rolex Datejust, and opal, diamond, peridot and sapphire rings, pendants and bracelets.

Viewing onsite by appointment 10am-5pm Friday May 20 and Saturday May 21.

