

LIFESTYLE

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SAVVY CONSUMER

Hotel luxury without the hotel cost

If the old proverb says that a man's home is his castle, then it only makes sense that the master bedroom connotes pure luxury. Good Housekeeping's advice: Splurge on the kind of fancy bedding items you find in hotel rooms, then top things off with a great

DETAILS

- ▶ **What:** Nature print sale including works by John James Audubon, Prideaux John Selby and Mark Catesby.
- ▶ **Where:** Emmet O'Neal Library in Mountain Brook.
- ▶ **When:** Friday, noon to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m.; Monday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- ▶ **Admission:** free.
- ▶ **FYI:** Call dealer J. Gilbert Johnston at 251-7353.



SPECIAL

A hand-watercolored stone lithograph of a red Texas wolf is from John James Audubon's "The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America." It's one of 300 prints by 18th and 19th century nature artists on sale this weekend at Emmet O'Neal Library.

Original nature prints by famed artists to be sold

By MICHAEL HUEBNER
News staff writer

Before jpeg files, videography and still photography, there were brush and pen strokes.

That was the only means of visually chronicling westward expansion in 18th and early 19th century America. Artists such as George Catlin, Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt were integral to expeditions into America's wilds, recording landscapes, frontier life and Indian battles and rituals.

Wildlife artists, both independently and as part of expeditions,

Painted new species of flora and fauna for voluminous collections of detailed color art.

On Friday, more than 300 original nature prints dating from 1731 to 1890 will go on sale at the Emmet O'Neal Library in Mountain Brook. John James Audubon, Prideaux John Selby and Mark Catesby are among the represented artists.

The prints are valued from \$65 to \$14,000 and range in size from octavo, at 7 by 10 inches, to the double elephant folio, at 25 by 38 inches.

▶ See **Prints**, Page 2E

PRINTS: Variety of prints available

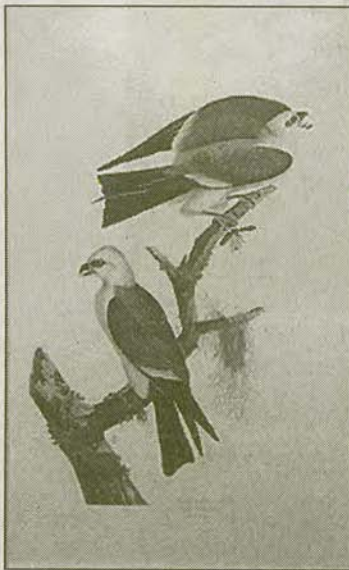
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Collector J. Gilbert Johnston is selling the prints through his newly formed Birmingham company, Antique Nature Prints. Some are from Johnston's own collection, but most are being sold on consignment from an estate in Louisiana. The prints stem from expeditions into America's interior.

"These are from the great naturalist artists," said Johnston, who has kayaked, canoed and backpacked all around the United States.

"They represent the great discoveries in the 18th and 19th centuries. It's fascinating not only to see their works but to read about America when the great wildlife concentrations were undiminished."

Johnston says that while he's been a collector for a long time, he's just a "beginning dealer" and is trying this kind of sale before considering whether to found a gallery or some other form of business.



SPECIAL

John James Audubon was one of the first artists to produce life-size sketches of wildlife. His 25½- by 38-inch watercolor of a Mississippi Kite, from "Birds of America," is one of 300 works up for sale this weekend at the Emmet O'Neal Library in Mountain Brook.

Audubon traveled widely to realize his goal of painting every species of American birds, re-

sulting in 435 hand-colored plates of 1,065 birds. The double elephant folio prints were sold in series, and the entire collection, titled "The Birds of America," sold for \$1,000. Today a complete original edition is worth \$4 million.

In addition to 18 double elephant folio and more than 100 octavo Audubons, the sale will include 60 works from bird books by 19th century British ornithologist John Gould, orchid prints by Robert Warner, prints from the 1790s by William Curtis and from the early 19th century by Alexander Wilson.

Johnston is a longtime art collector with degrees in history and law. He put works by Selby, Wilson and Catesby in perspective.

"Prideaux John Selby, who knew Audubon, produced 'British Ornithology,' which was the largest, most sumptuous book done on British birds," said Johnston. "Wilson also knew Audubon and gave him the idea that he could publish his works. Catesby is considered the founder of American ornithology and did the first illustrated book on American flora and fauna in 1731."