



Annie are two such collectors who have done just that. Beginning in 1991, selling antiques, old clocks and curios, their store, Passions, is now one of Singapore's top heirloom watch specialists. For Jonathan, the name, Passions, reflects his own life-long love for the business.

By 1991, Tee finally put his hobby to work, opening his first store. Today Passions is one of the best places in Singapore to either start a new collection or enlarge an existing one. Here you'll find a range of vintage, new and pre-owned watch brands with prices ranging from as low as US\$300 all the way up to US\$150,000.



"I'd have to say that I really began in this line as a teenager," says Tee. "As a young man I was always interested in the mechanical side of everything and was always pulling things like radios, watches and bicycles apart."

But if you're going to spend that much money on a collectible, then you'll be pretty keen to make sure it's authentic. For this, Singapore's reputation is immaculate. Stores like Passions need to be licensed by the government.

"I've always seen watches as being a 'guy's' jewelry item and a status symbol, so when I got my first antique watch it

The collector's market in Singapore is growing all the time with the establishment

a passion for the collectible

Singapore's reputation for shopping, and passion for brand names, are well known. But it's the city's fast-growing collector's market that has recently been getting all the reviews.

IN particular, it's the collection of high-end portable valuables, such as watches, pens and jewelry that are enjoying not just the attention of the Lion City's inhabitants, but also of international collectors. Because of this, Singapore has now become one of Asia's top destinations for collectors.

Much of this surge in the collectibles market is due to the interest and perseverance of collectors who are turning their hobbies into businesses. Jonathan Tee and his sister

was only natural for me to be attracted to it from not only a mechanical point of view, but also an aesthetic one."

The love of the mechanical side of his first antique timepiece began his study of its insides, which was then complemented by his study of product design at polytechnic. Tee then traveled extensively – "in the days before the internet that was the only way to do it" – scouring classified advertisements in foreign countries for each addition to his antique watch collection.

of stores like Passions, which take their hobbies very, very seriously. Passions, and others like it become meeting places for collectors, complete with mini libraries and databases for the benefit of their customers.

"I think that the increase in stores like ours in Singapore is mainly due to the education system we have here," says Tee. "In developed countries we are able to see the true values of items, rather than just looking for the quick profit."

PASSIONS

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