

TIPS TO BUYING AND SELLING COLLECTIBLE BULLION

By AGWire™
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Buying on auction is so easy that even a JP Morgan desk monkey can do it! You pursue something you want and usually end up bidding against other collectors who are also in on the chase. You try not to let your emotions influence your purchase, which often times can be hard to do. Sure, there are strategies and certainly psychology involved in posturing your bids. But, in the end, the highest bidder always prevails. Always. And why is that? Because that high bidder was willing to pay more than anyone else. It's as simple as that!

It would be an understatement to say we surf eBay auctions on a regular basis. It wouldn't be an overstatement to say we might even be a wee bit obsessed by eBay auctions... even though we would *never* admit it. With all the attention we give auctions, specifically those relating to anything Engelhard, we've recently become a little critical at some of the auction presentations and content we've seen. In fact, this article was inspired by two very contrasting Engelhard auctions on eBay in just this past week. If you're one of the parties responsible, we either applaud your efforts for accuracy and detail, or, conversely, we politely and constructively critique your misrepresentation of information. Our insight is offered all in the spirit of collectively working together to build a stronger and more well-respected collector community for all of us. After all, like the hokey pokey, that's what it's all about!

Below are photos of the two aforementioned eBay auction examples:



The first example, pictured on the left, was listed and relisted on eBay auction as a Tier 1 serial absent variety with a mintage of <500. Our first gripe with this auction is the Tier 1 rating. There were two classifications of this 3rd Series 5-digit serial number ingot: (1) leading-zero ingots with mintage of <500 that are designated as Tier 1; and (2) non leading-zero ingots with mintage of <5000, designated as Tier 2. Anyone looking at the photo can CLEARLY see that the serial number was **ground off** post-production, with no remaining trace of the original serial number. Our

experience and instinct when it comes to serial numbers being removed is that these bars/ingots were at one time stolen. For the seller to represent that this ingot 'was' one of the lucky 10% produced in leading-zero, Tier 1 variety is outright misleading. The ingot 'was' likely a Tier 2. However, by grinding off the serial number - unquestionably the single most important detail to Engelhard authenticity and valuation – the culprit also removed any collector value. And to top that off, the seller's description stated, 'All Engelhard said the serial number could be removed.' For the record, we never said that and we're not even quite sure what that means. Although the bar now weighs less than 10 troy ounces, it is still 999+ silver and may be still be considered good bullion.

We literally received **dozens** of inquiries on this particular auction from collectors, most of them urging us to get involved to either block this auction/seller or ask the seller to cancel the listing because of misrepresentation. After some lengthy dialogue with several collectors and the seller, the auction was revised, but not to our satisfaction as it still quoted us inaccurately in the description.

The beautiful takeaway of this situation is that every time we see one of these questionable auctions, there are at least a dozen or more vigilant and astute collectors who recognize an immediate concern and take action. This is truly a wonderful thing and very much reflects the spirit of the coin-collecting world, in which a small but strong nucleus of collectors *police* auction forums for fraudulent listings.

In a different light, the 3oz United Refining & Smelting ingot in the above right photo is currently on eBay auction. This ingot is a genuine Legacy Tier 1 ingot and, not surprisingly, offers a healthy but warranted Buy It Now price. The auction photos represent the ingot in full detail. The description and narrative are spot-on accurate, and a collector could comfortably acquire this ingot based on auction representation alone. This is a great example of how auctions should be presented in order to validate and show respect for both the ingot and our collector community. This particular seller also referenced the All Engelhard website along with an excerpt from the Definitive Page showing their specific ingot variety. This is exciting for us to see, and we encourage more sellers to do the same in the future!

Let's think about the items we've bought on public auction over the years... wouldn't it be safe to say that the **main photo** was the single most compelling part of the auction to draw your attention? We think so. A main photo that offers crystal clear detail of the entire image is better than any words could ever describe.

In a nutshell, when listing an auction item, we suggest considering the following:

1. Use high quality photos and show all surfaces of the bar or ingot.
2. Create a simple, catchy and descriptive auction heading. For example:
Engelhard UNITED 3 oz Silver Ingot Bar -- ULTRA RARE ICR Tier 1 -- 1 of 3 known
3. Describe your item in appropriate detail and reference any verifiable information, and please **get the facts right**. If the mintage is <500, don't represent <300. Buyers are smart enough to fact check and if something is suspicious they will avoid your auctions.
4. Use Spellcheck! If the ingot is a Tier 1 example, don't list it as a *Tear Won* bar. We wish we were kidding but we actually see descriptions like this regularly. Buyers expect and deserve professional sellers that understand and show respect for the rare bullion market.

5. Give your auction sufficient exposure time on the global auction platform, at least 7 or 10 days and perhaps more, if appropriate.
6. Pricing: We'll keep this short... if you list open-auction with no reserve it will likely sell at market value. If you have an ultra rare ingot and want to achieve top dollar without risking a lower auction close, or just want to put it out to market to let collectors know the item is available, there is no harm in pricing it high. This method puts the collector community on notice of availability. Parties often connect directly and listings are then removed.

Today's online auction platforms are worldwide and reach a wider audience than ever before. The Engelhard collector community continues to draw strong global participation now that auctions are accessible from halfway across the world. This is reason enough for sellers to take their time and put extra care into crafting their eBay auctions, and *shake it all about* and make it POP. As a growing collector community, we can all make a concerted effort to raise the bar in respect of the world's greatest refiner!

Engelheartedly,

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