

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Travel back to a golden age at Red Rose Antiques in Paris](#)

Lead

Antiques are no longer just for the blue-haired grannies sitting at home with their Royal Doulton figurines. With classic jukeboxes, foosball tables from the 1930s, and vintage luggage from the likes of Louis Vuitton and Goyard, Rose Grun proves that antiques are cooler now than ever before...

After a childhood of driving about Paris in her mother's classic Canary Yellow Mustang Convertible from California, and travelling around with her aunt and her awe-inspiring vintage luggage set, it seemed only natural for Rose Grun to delve into a career that required her to travel the world in search of the best antique luggage and collectables — and that she did. We visited the flame-haired Rose at her [Red Rose Antiques](#) shop in the Village Suisse in Paris to find out more about how she became one of the leading vintage luggage dealers in the world.



When were you first introduced to vintage luggage?

I think I was about 14. My aunt had a collection of vintage items. When we were with her, we really had the impression we lived in another era. Once, we went cruising together and she brought a whole collection of vintage luggage with her: hats cases, suitcases, and a huge trunk for her shoes!

Did you always know you wanted to work within this niche market?

After I graduated university with an international business degree and then did my masters in English, I didn't really know what I wanted to do for a career. Then, with my husband, I began acquiring antiques. I learned everything on the job, through meeting customers, visiting exhibitions and museums, and travelling a lot!



When you started Red Rose Antiques, did you set out to specialise in vintage luggage?

At the beginning of Red Rose Antiques, we didn't sell any luggage at all. We were more specialised in British furniture from the 1900s. I attended many antiques fairs with my husband, and once, we bumped into a whole set of luggage pretty similar to the one my aunt had. On an impulse, we decided to buy it, and after one day of displaying it in the shop, it was sold to a very famous American clothes brand that was doing some merchandising with vintage luggage. Then, this brand ordered some more luggage from us, so my husband and I went on another hunt to find what they needed.

This is actually how Red Rose began to specialise in vintage luggage. We kept buying more and more pieces, and after a few years, more than 50% of our stock was made of vintage luggage of every style — pieces that were leather and pieces that were aluminium, classic pieces and very unusual pieces, and pieces from both unknown and famous brands. Today, we're proud to offer the largest selection of Louis Vuitton luggage in Paris.

What differentiates Red Rose from other vintage luggage dealers?

We offer the largest vintage luxury luggage range in Paris, and we offer items in excellent condition, as we are very demanding when we purchase our luggage. What makes a big difference is that we don't only specialise in luggage but also vintage Italian lights, vintage football sets, safes, and jukeboxes. So, when a customer comes in for a trunk, he often leaves with it...as well as something else.



Is there a lot of competition on the vintage luggage market?

There's no real competition. It's actually the opposite — we're more like co-workers. We all know each other, and quite often, we send customers who're looking for something very specific to other dealers, and vice versa.

Counterfeit luxury leather goods is often a hot topic of discussion for the modern market. Is this the same for the vintage

market, as well? How can people avoid buying such pieces?

Unfortunately, yes, you can also find fake Louis Vuitton vintage trunks. But, actually, they're pretty easy to recognise, as the quality is really poor. The only advice I can give is to buy from well-known dealers — those who have a real shop, are offering a nice range of pieces, and are able to provide you with a proper invoice.

Who are your customers and what do they typically use their luggage for?

Well, we have all sorts of customers. The customer depends on the model of luggage we have on offer. Some of our customers really use the pieces as luggage (mostly hand luggage), while others buy them to decorate their homes, as trunks can be used as living room tables, desks, or put at the foot of a bed. Among our customers, we have a range of Louis Vuitton and Goyard collectors who've started their collections with us and who've come back every year to buy some new pieces. We have to admit, our French and foreign customers are pretty loyal!



How important are brands, such as Louis Vuitton and Goyard, when it comes to the value of vintage luggage?

Brands play a very important role in the world of vintage luggage, as they are the ultimate in quality, know-how, and good taste! Many small, talented workshops tried to imitate them in the middle of the 19th century, but they didn't succeed in the long run. Goyard has made a wonderful comeback on the market, mostly thanks to Jean-Michel Signoles and his dynamism, but it's still a quite confidential luxury brand. Whereas Louis Vuitton is more accessible to a wider range of people. Each house has its own clientele. Regularly, employees of Vuitton come to visit our gallery, as well as Mr Signoles, who we have an excellent relationship with.

Do you have your own personal collection of vintage luggage?

I indeed have my own (little) collection. And you know what? It's my aunt's luggage that she left to me, as she knew I'd take care of it. It has more of a sentimental value than anything.





What's the most amazing/original piece in your collection?

It's a cabinet trunk made by the American brand Hartmann. It's very particular, because it's based on a disc with roller bearings, so that the trunk can turn around to access its interior. It's organised with a dressing on one side and a row of trays on the other. It's made of parchment, and it's absolutely beautiful. But the most exciting thing is that there are some letters and a city painted on it — M.M. Hollywood — accompanied by some stable team stripes. Sometimes, I dream that those two letters are for Marilyn Monroe.

In your opinion, what will be the next big collectors' item?

All the big size trunks made between 1860 and 1950 — especially the ones made in very small series — will definitely be the next big collectors' item.

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Gallery

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