



Sports

SECTION C

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'Ages' highlights treasures

Golf Through the Ages was crafted for the golfer who would press a handful of grass from Pebble Beach in glass, for the one who treasures an original Jack Nicklaus MacGregor club, for the person who bid \$12,000 for a copy of Harold Hilton and Gardner Smith's 1912 large-paper edition of *The Royal and Ancient Game of Golf*.

Golf Through the Ages, written by Michael Flannery and Richard Leech and published by Golf Links Press, is European art history with a twist.

Flannery, an antiques dealer in Germany, spent more than a decade working on this project. The illustrations he chose range from carvings on church pews to tapestries.

A limited run of 150 hand-sewn books with a special painted gilt edging costs \$3,000. A smaller run of 26 sold out at \$5,500 each. A larger run of 1,999 — "the trade edition," bookseller Richard Donovan says — costs \$950. The Web site is www.golftthroughtheages.com.

Eddie Rapczun, a principal in Golf Links Press, says he turned to golf memorabilia after he left the Air Force in 1995, working first with Bobby Jones' family, and then with Ben Ho-



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gan-licensed products.

When this project was brought to his company, Rapczun says the historical models were Robert Clark's *Golf: A Royal and Ancient Game* and the Smith and Hilton book. A 1912 edition of the Smith and Hilton is expected to draw \$10,000 to \$15,000 at a June 24 auction at PBA Galleries in San Francisco. A copy of the Clark book sold in 1997 for \$2,750.

Rapczun sees his book as being "sought after as a cornerstone of collections."

Donovan, who with Richard Murdoch has written the bibliography antique golf book dealers rely on, says he sells *Golf Through the Ages* in his Endicott, N.Y., shop and through www.golftread.com. "It's a seminal work on the history of stick and ball games through the ages."

George Fox, a vice president and the senior auctioneer at PGA Galleries, says, "I'll tell you this — \$3,000 for this book doesn't take me back because collectors are starved for golf books." When you pay \$300-\$400 to play one round at Pebble Beach, Fox says, \$3,000 is not a big deal.

By Carol Herwig