

Top experts launch AGS, independent grading and authentication service for petroliana and other antique advertising

Elite team authenticates, grades and values gas & oil, soda pop, tobacco, brewery and country store items at their premises, shows, auctions or other locations

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In any business or industry, information is the most valuable commodity. That certainly holds true in the antiques, art and vintage collectibles world, where authenticity and knowing accurate market values are essential to any transaction. As the insatiable demand for sports cards and memorabilia; coins, and vintage comic books continues to grow at an exponential rate, collectors, investors and auction houses increasingly are turning to independent services whose specialists can provide accurate grading and authentication of their items. This trend is what has led a group of prominent and well-respected experts in the field of antique advertising to launch a new company known as [Authentication & Grading Services](#), or AGS.

AGS's principals include Dan Morris, founder of the renowned [Cedartown Museum of Coca-Cola Memorabilia](#) in Georgia; and John Mihovetz, who is known throughout the automobilia and petroliana hobby for his stellar track record as Head of Automobilia & Petroliana at Morphy Auctions. Morris assumes the post of president and will manage day-to-day operations and the Coca-Cola/soda pop division at AGS, while Mihovetz, who serves as founding CEO, will oversee all activities pertaining to gas and oil collectibles. AGS also takes pride in announcing its board of advisers, which includes legendary Coca-Cola, soda pop and general antique advertising dealer



L to R: AGS's president Dan Morris and founding CEO John Mihovetz hold two high-scoring porcelain signs that have both received an AGS certification decal and custom-printed certification card.

Gary Metz; and Carter and Irene Davis, who are widely regarded as pioneers in the field of country store advertising. The five principals represent a combined 100 years of experience in the antique advertising hobby and trade.

AGS offers three tiers of service to its customers: authentication, authentication plus grading, and a top tier that includes authentication, grading and current-market valuation. "The highest level would be of particular interest to anyone who wants to make sure their collection is adequately insured," said Morris. As part of the service, each item is inspected and assigned a custom-printed sticker showing its assigned grade and a unique QR code. In addition, each customer receives a full-color certificate bearing a photo of their item and its grading information.



An exceptional example of a 1930s porcelain Super Shell pump plate, which received an AGS-certified score of 95. Every item authenticated by AGS experts receives a custom-printed AGS decal and certification card.

The company implements a grading scale of 1 to 100 in which every aspect of an item is assigned

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Our goal is total transparency. We use a grading scale of 1 to 100 in which every aspect of an item is assigned a number and those numbers are then combined to produce the final overall grade.”

Dan Morris, , President of AGS

a number and those numbers then combine to produce the final overall grade. “It’s a scientific, mathematical approach,” Morris said. “If an item is graded 92 out of 100, the owner of the item will know exactly how that grade was achieved. Our goal is total transparency, and this will be a clear, accurate system of grading.” AGS also employs a cutting-edge Niton XRF Analyzer gun that assists in verifying the authenticity and originality of items.

Prices for the company’s services are standardized and based on the AGS-assessed value of a given item. For entire collections, a single fee applies and is determined on

a case-by-case basis.

Primarily but not exclusively, the categories of advertising assessed by AGS include soda pop, automobilia and petroliana; country store, tobacciana and breweriana. To have their items authenticated and/or graded, customers can either bring their pieces to AGS at its Lancaster

County, Pennsylvania location, ship them to AGS for authentication and return shipment, or take them to any antique show or auction where the AGS team is set up. AGS will have a booth at the Indy Ad Show on September 22-23, 2023, as well as at Morphy Auctions' September 29-October 1, 2023 Automobilia & Petroliana sale. At both events, items may be graded and AGS-stickered right on the spot. Special arrangements can be made to accommodate any client who wants their entire collection to be evaluated in situ at their home, office or other location.

The first major collection to be graded and AGS-stickered will be the [Bobby Knudsen Jr Automobilia, Petroliana & Soda Pop Advertising Collection](#) (Part III), which will be auctioned at Morphy's on September 29, 2023. "We've started at the highest caliber of the hobby with the Knudsen collection," Mihovetz observed. "The first two installments of Bobby's collection sold at Morphy's for a combined \$6.1 million, and five lots sold for an aggregate total of more than \$2 million. Prices like that are what convinced the founders of AGS that there was a need for our services in the antique advertising marketplace."

Most vintage advertising is composed of either paper, card stock, porcelain or tin. All are types of materials that the AGS team is unquestionably capable of authenticating, grading and valuing. Because those same materials are seen in so many other types of antiques and collectibles, the company will be expanding in the near future to offer its suite of services across many other popular collecting categories.



The back of the 1930s porcelain Super Shell pump plate with its AGS certification decal, and an image of the item as it appears on the reverse side of the corresponding custom certification card



A close-up of the Super Shell pump plate's custom-printed AGS decal, which displays the item's unique inventory number, its certified score and a QR code linking the item directly to the AGS database

AGS's website will go live on September 15, 2023. Visitors to the site will be able to scan a QR code or search an item number and see exactly how any given item received its grade. "There will also be a strong social and interactive aspect to the site, which we know collectors are going to love," Mihovetz said.

Dan Morris encourages collectors to reach out to him directly with any questions or comments. "Our goal is total transparency and we're open to constructive criticism and any ideas they may have," Morris said. "We want for AGS to be an asset to the hobby and look forward to hearing from collectors."



Two high-scoring porcelain signs, each with an AGS-certified decal on verso and accompanied by its AGS custom certification card.

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