

Do I hear...? Sshhhh!

How would Marcel Marceau fair as an auctioneer? Yes I know it's a bit of a daft question but it's one I found myself asking when I first heard about BIGGA's new Silent Auction.

However, having had the concept explained to me fully I realised that the world's foremost mime artiste would not be in Harrogate next year but that, despite this, the Silent Auction would be a superb event and one in which everyone who takes part benefits.

Donors receive valuable publicity for their donated items; bidders get high quality items for considerably less than they would normally have to pay and BIGGA ends up with contributions towards its Building Fund.

Admittedly it's not an idea for which the Association can take full credit as it has been a successful element of the GCSAA Show in America for a number of years and was debuted at the Canadian Golf Course Superintendent's Show in Toronto earlier this year to great acclaim.

The idea works by companies and individuals donating items to the Auction. These are then grouped into categories. The top five items, valued at £10,000 and over, are classed as The Premier Club and receive maximum publicity in the Silent Auction Catalogue, in the magazine, on BIGGA's Website and at an official reception during Harrogate week. The second category, The Masters Club, for items between £5,000 and £10,000, also receives extensive publicity and the third is The Classic Club, for items ranging in value from £5,000 down to a minimum of £250.

Bids sent via post, fax, e-mail and telephone to BIGGA HOUSE and in person during BTME 2000 itself will be gathered and the highest bid for each item will secure the lot when they are announced on the final day of the show. The top items will be on display at a special Silent Auction stand in Hall Q where you will be able to see at close hand your intended prize and assess how little you might be able to bid and still come up smiling.

I must admit I was a little disappointed that we wouldn't be seeing the theatre of a real live auction, complete with fast talking professional, but while the drama of a conventional auction might have brought additional excitement to the occasion, removing the worry of waving to a friend and ending up with a £15,000 bill for a triple mower or scratching your ear and finding yourself with two tonnes of organic fertiliser is more than compensation.

Experience is a necessary quality for any conventional auction visitor so the "Silent" method gives even the total rookie a chance of securing a magnificent bargain and saving a golf club a considerable sum of money. There will also be many items of personal interest for which to bid.

I believe the Silent Auction will certainly add to what is already destined to be an unforgettable BTME 2000 and hopefully it will become an established element of all BTME's to come.



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INTERNATIONAL



Y2K SPECIAL

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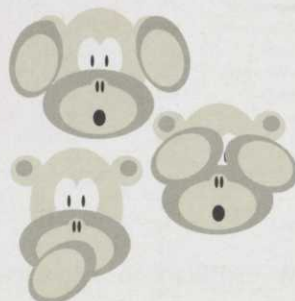


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