

Mom's Joy Room

Where Obsolescence Ends and Wonder Begins

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

Antique Display-Scale Tricycle with Wicker Sidecar

MARKET VALUE

\$300–\$500

ESTIMATED WORTH

\$600–\$950



Full side view with wicker sidecar



Detail of front wheel, saddle, and turned wood handlebars

A finely crafted antique display-scale tricycle with an attached hand-woven wicker sidecar, measuring approximately 21 inches long and 14 inches tall. Though display-scale rather than full-size, this piece stands apart from ordinary decorative tricycles through its exceptional construction quality: real wood-spoke wheels with metal rims, a functional pedal mechanism on the front wheel, turned wood handlebar grips, a shaped saddle seat, and a genuine hand-woven wicker sidecar basket. These are the same materials and techniques used in full-size Victorian-era tricycle manufacture, applied here at display scale with a level of craftsmanship that elevates this piece well above the mass-market stamped-metal decorative tricycles commonly found in the collectibles market.

The wicker sidecar is the defining feature of this piece — a wide, deep, hand-woven basket seat attached alongside the main tricycle frame. The sidecar lends itself beautifully to display purposes, ideal for holding a small antique doll, dried flowers, or seasonal décor, making this piece as functional as it is visually captivating.

History

The children's tricycle has its origins in the early 19th century, evolving from the adult velocipede and "boneshaker" bicycles of

the 1860s–1880s. The earliest children's tricycles were hand-built in wood and iron, modeled directly on the adult riding machines of their day. By the 1880s and 1890s, tricycle manufacturing had become a thriving industry, with firms in both Europe and the United States producing riding toys for children of all ages and social classes. These early tricycles were not merely toys — they were considered instruments of physical development, fresh-air exercise, and even character formation, reflecting the Victorian era's belief that active play was essential to a child's moral and physical education.

The velocipede-style tricycle — characterized by its simple front-wheel drive with pedals mounted directly on the front axle, a pair of rear wheels, and a minimalist wood-and-iron frame — represents the earliest and most primitive form of the children's tricycle. This design persisted from roughly the 1880s through the 1920s, gradually giving way to more complex chain-driven models with rubber tires and tubular steel frames. The wood-spoke wheel construction seen on this example is a hallmark of earlier manufacture, as rubber-tired metal wheels and pressed-steel components became standard on most children's tricycles by the late 1920s and 1930s.

Antique display-scale tricycles — smaller replicas of full-size children's tricycles — emerged as a popular collectible and home décor category throughout the early-to-mid 20th century. These pieces were produced both as standalone decorative objects and as functional items such as plant stands, flower displays, and doll accessories. The finest examples, like this one, incorporated genuine wood-spoke wheels, functional pedal mechanisms, and hand-woven wicker baskets rather than the stamped metal and synthetic materials used in later mass-market versions. The application of real construction techniques at display scale — individually shaped wooden spokes, a working pedal mechanism, turned wood handlebars — reflects a level of care and craftsmanship that places this piece in the upper tier of the decorative tricycle category.

The wicker sidecar is the defining feature of this particular piece. Wicker work — the craft of weaving rattan, reed, or willow branches into furniture and accessories — was enormously popular in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, used for everything from baby carriages and doll prams to porch furniture and traveling trunks. The application of wicker to a tricycle sidecar reflects the same impulse that produced wicker doll buggies and wicker push-carts: a desire to bring the elegance and lightness of woven craftsmanship into the realm of children's playthings and decorative objects. The sidecar likely served a dual purpose — as a practical carrier for a doll, small plant, or decorative arrangement and as a visual element that elevated the tricycle from a simple replica to a more elaborate, gift-worthy presentation piece.

The combination of wood-spoke wheels with metal rims, a functional pedal mechanism, turned wood handlebar grips, and hand-woven wicker construction points to a manufacture date in the early-to-mid 20th century. This piece sits above typical decorative tricycles in both materials and craftsmanship, placing it at the higher end of the decorative riding-toy collectible category. The absence of a visible maker's mark is not unusual for this type of piece — many smaller manufacturers and craft workshops did not stamp their products, and attribution often relies on construction details and stylistic comparison rather than definitive marks.

Antique and vintage decorative tricycles have experienced steady and growing collector interest, appealing not only to toy and doll collectors but also to enthusiasts of Victorian-era décor, wicker craftsmanship, and rustic display pieces. The sidecar configuration adds particular rarity — sidecar-equipped tricycles are infrequently seen at any scale in the secondary market, and the combination of real wood-spoke wheels with hand-woven wicker places this piece in the upper tier of its category. Comparable full-size antique velocipede tricycles with wood wheels have sold at auction for \$250 to over \$1,200, and while this is a display-scale piece rather than a rideable antique, the quality of its construction and the unusual sidecar attachment warrant a valuation well above ordinary decorative examples.

Notable Features

- ◆ Antique display-scale tricycle, approximately 21" L × 14" H — ideal for shelf, tabletop, or shop-floor display
- ◆ Real wood-spoke wheels with metal rims — genuine construction quality far exceeding typical stamped-metal decorative tricycles

- ◆ Functional pedal mechanism on front wheel — demonstrates authentic velocipede-era tricycle mechanics at display scale
- ◆ Turned wood handlebar grips and shaped saddle seat — consistent with early-to-mid 20th century craftsmanship
- ◆ Hand-woven wicker sidecar basket — a rare configuration seldom encountered in the decorative tricycle market at any size
- ◆ Sidecar ideal for displaying a small antique doll, dried flowers, or seasonal decorative arrangements
- ◆ Natural aged patina throughout — wood, iron, and wicker all show consistent, attractive age-appropriate wear
- ◆ No visible maker's mark; attribution based on construction materials and stylistic features

COLLECTOR NOTES

This piece is an antique display-scale tricycle — not a full-size child-rideable example, but a genuine period piece built at display scale. Its construction quality — real wood-spoke wheels, functional pedals, turned wood handlebars, and hand-woven wicker — places it significantly above the typical mass-market decorative tricycles that dominate the secondary market.

Attribution is based on construction materials and stylistic features rather than a confirmed maker's mark, which is common for decorative tricycles from smaller workshops or regional builders. The wicker sidecar weave shows expected age-consistent wear but remains structurally intact. The sidecar configuration adds meaningful rarity value — sidecar-equipped tricycles are seldom encountered at any scale in the secondary market. Recommended for display purposes.

"The littlest wheels carry the biggest imaginations — and the sidecar always holds the treasure."

Sandy Wade

Proprietor, Mom's Joy Room

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