



Mimi's Handbook for Dollmakers

Pricing Your Dolls to Sell

by Gloria J. "Mimi" Winer

Take a good look at the finished doll.

- Are you happy with it? Did you do a good job? Is it only okay, or is it excellent?
- What was your total cost of materials?
- What was the total time it took to complete the doll? (Keep in mind that the first time you make a new pattern it takes much longer).
- How much are similar dolls going for in your area? You can get more in upscale areas.
- Are you selling through a shop or gallery? If you are selling wholesale, your wholesale price should be about 50% of the retail price. You may be able to do better than this through a local store. If you are selling on consignment (you get paid only if the doll sells), remember that you may get the doll back unsold and dirty or shopworn from handling.
- Usually a good rule of thumb is three times the price of materials plus whatever you want to get for your own work, or five times the cost of materials, and don't count your time.

If the doll sells easily, the price is probably right. If it attracts a lot of attention but doesn't sell, the price is probably too high. If you have more orders than you can fill, your price is too low.

Many serious collectors love to "discover" a new artist on the way up and purchase dolls while they are still affordable.

I have a problem with porcelain doll artists who sculpt a doll, make a "limited edition" and sell those pieces for four figures, and then, a year later, sell the molds so that look-alikes are on craft tables everywhere. Then, still later, they sell a vinyl edition (limited to how many can be made in three months, 3 shifts a day, seven days a week). The vinyl dolls are usually under \$200. If you were a collector who had paid over \$1000 for the original limited edition, you would be very unhappy.

When I design a doll pattern, I make four to six prototypes and tell the collectors exactly what they are, and that a pattern for reproduction will be published. These dolls sell for about half of what my one-of-a-kind dolls go for.