Vintage Tablecloth Condition Rating Scale

Provided for your use by the online Vintage Tablecloth Lovers Club

The following Tablecloth Condition Rating Scale is intended as a base guideline for buyers and sellers.

- Mint:
  - This category of vintage tablecloths describes an unused, never laundered cloth. It is to be in the original pristine condition as if it was still on the store shelf. There should be no stains, odor, holes, tears or any kind of damage.
  - Cloth should be crisp and brightly colored. Storage fading is not acceptable. Neither is storage staining.
  - Small inconspicuous factory defects such as thick threads and dye drips common for the period are acceptable. But this does not include what might be called a "second" with a serious factory defect.
  - Mint tablecloths may or may not have a paper label, a sewn-in cloth tag or be in the original box or package.

- Excellent:
  - This category of vintage tablecloths describes those cloths which at first glance look perfect but are in fact not mint.
  - They may have never been used but have storage staining. They may have been gently used and may have been laundered with some stain removal, both of which should be noted.
  - There should be no fading, holes, tears, odor and any stains should not be seen when the cloth is on the table, although they may be visible when held to the light.
  - They may have tiny pinholes or thread breaks.
  - The material will still be crisp and the colors vivid with no fading. Factory defects may exist, but they will be inconspicuous.
  - Excellent tablecloths may or may not have a paper label, a sewn-in cloth tag or be in the original box or package.
  - An Excellent tablecloth may be "Near Mint" but it cannot be labeled as "Mint".

- Good:

The Tablecloth Condition Rating Scale was created as a joint project by members of the Vintage Tablecloth Lovers Club. Member buyers and sellers of vintage tablecloths gave input to this consensus building project.

    - This category describes vintage tablecloths which have been gently used but which may or may not have been restored. They can still be used as tablecloths and are still nice on the table.
    - The cloth may have faint yellowing in places and other mysterious small stains (storage, dark streaks, rust pin dots).
    - It may have pinpoint holes, thread breaks, or frayed places, or the hem may be unraveling a bit. These faults should be inconspicuous; the stains/holes should not be near or in the center of the cloth where they are highly visible, but on the drop.
    - If there is an actual hole, it should be less than ½" and should be inconspicuously repaired and noted in the description.
    - The cloth should still be crisp and if there is any fading it should be an overall fade and should be noted.
    - Factory defects may be noticeable when the cloth is on the table.

- Poor:
    - This category describes vintage tablecloths which have been heavily used and which have not seen restoration. The cloth will have visible stains, including perhaps food, grease, or paint, and may have other stains from storage, rust, or other unknown causes. The tablecloth will have many holes, tears, and frayed places and the hem may be unraveling. The fabric will, in many cases, not be crisp and will be thin, yellowed, and dirty. There may be uneven fading or an overall fade or poorly done darns/patches in obvious places.
    - These cloths are often labeled as a cutter or for crafting. They cannot really be used as a tablecloth any longer, even for a picnic.

Buyers, please note that we cannot guarantee that any seller uses this Condition Rating Scale. We provide it, hoping they will, and that you as a buyer will ask sellers clarifying questions regarding condition, using this scale as a guide. We also ask that you refer them to this guide if appropriate.

Sellers, we strongly recommend using this scale as we are making every effort to educate buyers regarding condition. Some sellers restore or clean their tablecloths before sale, but many others do not. The success of restoration (or lack of it) should be included in the individual descriptions of any seller using this scale.
If you wish, feel free to include a link to this scale in your listings to help buyers understand your description.

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