

A GRAND GUIDE TO BUYING A USED STEINWAY PIANO



STEINWAY & SONS

FOR THOSE WHOSE DESIRE FOR A USED STEINWAY PIANO IS 100% GENUINE.

A Grand Guide to Buying a Used Steinway Piano is designed to assist you in your journey in selecting a genuine used Steinway piano—from learning about how a Steinway is built and rebuilt, to what makes a Steinway a genuine Steinway and what factors to consider when shopping the used-Steinway market.



SEVEN TYPES OF USED STEINWAY PIANOS

Every seller, piano dealer, and technician will classify a used Steinway piano in a different way; but, for the sake of this guide, we've broken it into seven simple categories.

SHELL

A used Steinway piano that has never been restored. Typically, the piano is not in playing condition, if it will play at all. The piano has been neglected, damaged or compromised, and has had no annual maintenance for an extended period of time.



STEIN-WAS

A Stein-Was is a used Steinway piano that has had one or more parts replaced with non-Steinway parts. Therefore, it was a Steinway piano; now it isn't.

REPAIRED

This is a Steinway that has had parts repaired over time without replacing any major components. The piano has been maintained and is still capable of being played daily, but major parts will likely need replacing in the near future.

REBUILT

A rebuilt Steinway is a piano in which all the components have been rebuilt to its original condition. Some major components commonly rebuilt are the soundboard, bridges, and action parts, as well as the case.

HEIRLOOM COLLECTION

Steinway Heirloom Collection pianos are available through authorized Steinway dealers. Each Heirloom carries the same 5-year warranty as a new Steinway, has genuine Steinway parts, and is distinguished by a medallion on the inner-rim and a Certificate of Authenticity.

ORIGINAL

An original used Steinway piano is one that has never had any parts replaced since it was manufactured. Typically, these are less than 20 years old.

FACTORY RESTORATION

A Steinway piano that was restored by the Steinway Restoration Center in New York City and had the original parts replaced with genuine Steinway parts.

HOW TO DETERMINE THE AGE OF ANY USED STEINWAY PIANO

When shopping for a used Steinway piano, you will want to take into consideration its age. By determining the age of the piano, you will have a better understanding of its history, features, and condition. Below are 3 steps for determining the age of a Steinway piano:

LOCATE THE SERIAL NUMBER.

As new pianos are completed, they are serial-numbered consecutively and the number is applied to the cast-iron plate.

LOOK UP THE SERIAL NUMBER.

Now that you have the serial number, you can use the chart on the next page to find out the year the piano was built.



ON STEINWAY GRAND PIANOS

The serial number is found on the cast-iron plate between the tuning pins above the keyboard.



ON STEINWAY UPRIGHT PIANOS

The serial number is located on top of the cast-iron plate when you open the toplid.

REQUEST THE PIANO'S HISTORY.

At the Steinway factory, there are several leather-bound log books that hold the records on every piano built by Steinway & Sons since 1853. As pianos are completed, they are serial-numbered and, even today, handwritten into the Steinway archives which list the details of every Steinway piano built.

Anyone with a serial number from any Steinway piano can contact Steinway & Sons or their local Steinway dealer for the information on a specific Steinway, including the model, original finish, completion date, and the dealer to whom it was first shipped. The historical records of each and every piano built is just another one of the things that make a Steinway unique.

AGES OF STEINWAY PIANOS

Note: Serial numbers represent rounded-off count at year end. A few of the early years are spanned.

483 / 1853	75000 = 1893	225000 = 1924	334000 = 1951	455300 = 1978	574500 = 2005
1000 = 1856	80000 = 1894	235000 = 1925	337000 = 1952	463000 = 1979	578500 = 2006
2000 = 1858	85000 = 1896	240000 = 1926	340000 = 1953	468500 = 1980	582500 = 2007
3000 = 1860	90000 = 1898	255000 = 1927	343000 = 1954	473500 = 1981	584600 = 2008
5000 = 1861	95000 = 1900	260000 = 1928	346500 = 1955	478500 = 1982	587500 = 2009
7000 = 1863	100000 = 1901	265000 = 1929	350000 = 1956	483000 = 1983	589500 = 2010
9000 = 1864	105000 = 1902	270000 = 1930	355000 = 1957	488000 = 1984	
11000 = 1865	110000 = 1904	271000 = 1931	358000 = 1958	493000 = 1985	
13000 = 1866	115000 = 1905	274000 = 1932	362000 = 1959	498000 = 1986	
15000 = 1867	120000 = 1906	276000 = 1933	366000 = 1960	503000 = 1987	
17000 = 1868	125000 = 1907	278000 = 1934	370000 = 1961	507700 = 1988	
19000 = 1869	130000 = 1908	279000 = 1935	375000 = 1962	512600 = 1989	
21000 = 1870	135000 = 1909	284000 = 1936	380000 = 1963	516700 = 1990	
23000 = 1871	140000 = 1910	289000 = 1937	385000 = 1964	521000 = 1991	
25000 = 1872	150000 = 1911	290000 = 1938	390000 = 1965	523500 = 1992	
27000 = 1873	155000 = 1912	294000 = 1939	395000 = 1966	527000 = 1993	
29000 = 1874	160000 = 1913	300000 = 1940	400000 = 1967	530000 = 1994	
31000 = 1875	165000 = 1914	305000 = 1941	405000 = 1968	533500 = 1995	
33000 = 1876	170000 = 1915	310000 = 1942	412000 = 1969	537200 = 1996	
35000 = 1877	175000 = 1916	314000 = 1943	418000 = 1970	540700 = 1997	
40000 = 1878	185000 = 1917	316000 = 1944	423000 = 1971	545600 = 1998	
45000 = 1881	190000 = 1918	317000 = 1945	426000 = 1972	549600 = 1999	
50000 = 1883	195000 = 1919	319000 = 1946	431000 = 1973	554000 = 2000	
55000 = 1886	200000 = 1920	322000 = 1947	436000 = 1974	558000 = 2001	
60000 = 1887	205000 = 1921	324000 = 1948	439000 = 1975	562500 = 2002	
65000 = 1889	210000 = 1922	328000 = 1949	445000 = 1976	567000 = 2003	
70000 = 1891	220000 = 1922	331000 = 1950	450000 = 1977	571000 = 2004	

Source: The Official Guide to Steinway Pianos

IF IT DOESN'T HAVE 12,116 GENUINE STEINWAY PARTS, IT ISN'T A STEINWAY

Used, vintage, and restored Steinway pianos are often prized for their unique beauty and enduring value. However, for years, non-Steinway dealers and unauthorized piano rebuilders have created a great deal of confusion in the piano industry. Many piano rebuilders use inferior non-Steinway parts, seriously compromising an instrument's performance and investment value.

BUILT FOR A STEINWAY PIANO

For more than 160 years, Steinway & Sons has been on a continuing quest to improve the Steinway piano. Continuous improvement means finding the perfect balance of the many thousands of parts which make up a Steinway piano. When a Steinway piano is rebuilt, it is imperative that Steinway parts be used in this process if the piano is to play and sound as a Steinway should play and sound.

A Steinway piano is designed to use genuine Steinway parts, and it performs its best when these parts are used. If the parts are not 100% Steinway, then the piano is not 100% Steinway and its performance and investment value will be compromised.

WHY DO SOME REBUILDERS USE NON-STEINWAY PARTS?

Non-Steinway replacement parts used in the rebuilding of a Steinway piano are purchased for one reason only: They are cheaper, both in price and quality. There is no other reason.

To the right is a comparison of genuine Steinway parts vs. non-Steinway parts for a Steinway Model O (5'10") grand piano.

PRICE COMPARISON STEINWAY VS. NON-STEINWAY PARTS

HAMMERS

Steinway & Sons	\$ 540
Abel "Lite"	\$ 275
Abel "Standard"	\$ 310
Abel "Select"	\$ 425
Imadegawa	\$ 225

REPETITIONS (WHIPPENS)

Steinway & Sons	\$ 1,250
Tokiwa "Steinway Style"	\$ 875

WRESTPLANK (PINBLOCK)

Steinway & Sons	\$ 819
Generic "Single"	\$ 445

HAMMERSHANKS WITH FLANGES

Steinway & Sons	\$ 650
Abel "Steinway Style"	\$ 419
Tokiwa "Standard"	\$ 425

BACKCHECKS WITH WIRES

Steinway & Sons	\$ 255
Tokiwa "Steinway Style"	\$ 195

SOUNDBOARD

Steinway & Sons	Not For Sale
Generic Soundboard	\$ 695
Generic Pre-Crowned	
Ribbed Soundboard	\$2,170

As you can see, there is a significant cost difference between genuine Steinway parts and non-Steinway or "Steinway style" parts and this is the reason why there is such a great deal of confusion when shopping for a used Steinway piano.

IF YOU READ ONLY ONE SECTION OF THIS GUIDE, READ THIS SECTION

The soundboard lies at the heart of a Steinway grand or upright piano, which is why Steinway & Sons takes great care in its design and in the selection of the wood used. The soundboard is a critical component in producing the inimitable “Steinway Sound” you desire.

ABOUT THE SOUNDBOARD

Close-grained, quarter-sawn Sitka spruce, with a prescribed minimum number of annual growth rings is the wood used for Steinway soundboards. These close-grained lines enable the sound-producing energy to travel more efficiently to the end of the soundboard. When combined with the soundboard being gradually tapered from the center to the edge, which permits the freedom of movement, it creates a sound of unparalleled richness, sonority, and sustain.

STEINWAY NEVER SELLS ITS SOUNDBOARDS

Steinway sells their soundboards to no one, since the skill, expertise and machinery necessary to replace a soundboard is only available at the Steinway factory. So if a used Steinway was restored somewhere other than the Steinway Restoration Center, it may still have the Steinway & Sons trademark logo on it, but if it doesn't have a genuine Steinway & Sons soundboard, it has lost the internal magic that makes it a Steinway.

SOUNDBOARDS FROM SCRATCH

Steinway does not buy their soundboards, instead, they buy the spruce planks to make their soundboards. Steinway's strict standards for soundboard spruce and their yield factor on the prime-grade planks they purchase is only 50%. Meaning, of all the spruce that Steinway inspects and purchases, only 50% of that spruce goes into the making their soundboards. This allows Steinway to build each soundboard to *their* standards, not the lumber supplier's.



ASSURING THE STEINWAY PIANO IS GENUINE

In the two previous sections, we've covered the importance of making sure the used Steinway you purchase is in fact a genuine Steinway. But how can you be sure you are investing in a genuine Steinway piano?

Declaration of
STEINWAY PARTS AUTHENTICITY

MODEL _____

FINISH _____

SERIAL NUMBER _____

I _____ OF _____ DECLARE ON ____/____/____
THAT THE ABOVE STEINWAY PIANO HAS BEEN RESTORED USING THE FOLLOWING GENUINE STEINWAY PARTS:

- SOUNDBOARD
- BRIDGES
- WRESTPLANK/PINBLOCK
- HAMMERS, SHANKS AND REPETITIONS

PRESENTER NAME AND TITLE

DECLARATION OF STEINWAY PARTS

If the seller doesn't have a statement with their signature you can use a Declaration of Steinway Parts Authenticity Certificate available from your local Steinway dealer. Present this certificate to any rebuilder or seller of a rebuilt Steinway piano and request that they fill it out and sign it to ensure that the piano has genuine Steinway parts.

GENUINE STEINWAY PARTS

Should you decide to buy a used Steinway piano not restored by Steinway & Sons, it is recommended that you request, in writing, from the seller, a statement verifying that the piano has 100% genuine Steinway parts and that it can be proven.

A LEGACY OF INNOVATION WHICH CONTINUES TODAY

The very first Steinway & Sons patent was granted in 1857, and since that time, the company has been granted more than 125 additional patents. As a consumer shopping for a used Steinway, it is important to consider when these patents were implemented, how they work, and what benefits they provide for pianists like yourself.

"Strive always to improve the instrument."

It is important to remember that a Steinway piano will only feature the patents preceding the date of its completion.

This means that a Steinway grand piano completed on March 5, 1923, will NOT have any of the innovations or advancements developed after that date such as:



ACCELERATED ACTION OCTOBER 13, 1931 • PATENT #1826848

The touch of a Steinway is the most sensitive and responsive of any piano made. This is not merely an opinion. It is a fact that results from the way the piano is designed and manufactured. In fact, tests have proven that the keys on a Steinway piano can repeat 14% more quickly than the keys of any other piano.



DIAPHRAGMATIC SOUNDBOARD AUGUST 18, 1936 • PATENT #2051633

The current production of the Steinway & Sons soundboard is based on a 1936 patent to achieve optimum performance in dynamic range, and maximum sustain. Under this patent, the soundboard is gradually tapered from the center to the edge, permitting freedom of movement and creating a sound of unparalleled richness, sonority, and sustain.



HEXAGRIP PINBLOCK MAY 28, 1963 • PATENT #3091149

Due to the unique design of the Steinway pinblock all Steinway pianos hold their tune longer. The secret lies in the grain of the wood. The grain of each layer is positioned at 45 degrees to the grain in the next layer. As a result, the tuning pins are exposed on all sides to the tenacious grip of the maple's end grain. The tighter the grip on the tuning pins, the longer the piano stays in tune.

THE "GOLDEN-AGE" MYTH

There are rebuilders, technicians, and non-Steinway dealers who will claim that Steinway pianos built during the "Golden Age" are the best Steinway pianos ever built. This is a myth that has been around since Steinway started building pianos.

ARE OLDER STEINWAY PIANOS REALLY BETTER THAN NEW ONES?

As the late Henry Z. Steinway, great-grandson of the founder of Steinway & Sons, often said, "Steinway pianos crafted 40 years ago were always from the 'Golden Age.' It didn't matter which year — 1900, 1920, 1950, 2008—the 'Golden Age' was always 40 years ago!"

WHY THE MYTH EXISTS

There are very few piano dealers that are authorized to sell new Steinway pianos throughout the world (only about 68 in North America) but many piano dealers who can acquire used Steinway pianos to resell. Since they can't sell new Steinway pianos, it is to their benefit to advertise that their used Steinway from the "Golden Age" is more desirable than a new one.

ARTISTS DEMAND THE BEST

The myth of the "Golden Age" is easily disproved. Just look at the concert halls throughout the world who cater to the most discriminating pianists of our time. How old are the pianos you are hearing? On average, they are less than 10 years old. If the world's most prominent pianists felt that pianos from a "Golden Age" were superior to those produced today, we would not see new Steinway pianos on these stages.



A STEINWAY PIANO IS BUILT TO BE REBUILT

There are hundreds of companies and technicians who rebuild Steinway pianos. However, there is only one piano rebuilder in the world who is authorized by Steinway & Sons to restore Steinway pianos: the Steinway Restoration Center (which operates out of the Steinway New York factory and the Steinway Hamburg factory). A piano restored by the Restoration Center is the closest piano possible to a brand-new Steinway.

BENEFITS OF SELECTING A USED STEINWAY PIANO RESTORED BY THE STEINWAY RESTORATION CENTER



PROCESSES

No one else has all the original designs, specifications and necessary equipment.

AUTHORIZED

The Steinway Restoration Center is the only authorized Steinway piano rebuilder in the world.

AUTHENTICITY

Each and every Steinway piano restored receives a Certificate of Authenticity which guarantees the piano was restored using genuine Steinway parts.

CRAFTSMANSHIP

Who better to restore a vintage Steinway piano than the craftsmen who built it?

SECURITY

Steinway pianos restored at the Restoration Center carry a 5-year Steinway warranty; the same as a brand-new Steinway.

160 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Since 1853, Steinway & Sons has built over 595,000 new Steinway pianos and they are the world's largest rebuilder of Steinway pianos. Simply put, no one knows a Steinway like Steinway.



Average number of months it takes the Restoration Center to restore a Steinway grand piano.



The Steinway Restoration Center restores more than 200 Steinway pianos a year.



The average age of a Steinway piano restored by the Steinway Restoration Center.

A SOUND INVESTMENT

Times change. Markets rise and fall. But for more than a century and a half, every handcrafted Steinway piano has increased in value.

The best time to invest in a Steinway piano is always the same: **TODAY**. That's because when factory prices of new Steinway pianos increase, the value of used Steinway pianos also rise.

Below is a historical listing of prices:

YEAR	MODEL D	YEAR	MODEL S
1900	\$1,400	1935	\$885
1925	\$2,700	1945	\$1,524
1950	\$6,900	1950	\$2,585
1975	\$13,500	1975	\$5,540
2000	\$83,100	2000	\$32,400
2012	\$137,400	2012	\$54,500

PIANO DIMENSIONS: 8' 11.75"

PIANO DIMENSIONS: 5' 1"

"A 10-year-old Steinway in good condition, usually sells for about 75 percent of the current retail price, which goes up about 4 percent each year."

-Reuters, November 2003

"Over the past decade, the price on the classic Steinway Model B grand piano—currently \$81,200—increased 48%, far outpacing the 29% rise in inflation."

-Barron's, November 2010

A 50 YEAR OLD STEINWAY
COMMANDS A PRICE
MORE THAN 9 TIMES
ITS ORIGINAL COST



HISTORICAL APPRECIATION OF STEINWAY GRAND PIANOS

Actual NY Retail prices for Steinway Model B piano used. Other models vary slightly based on model but follow the same overall trend. Past performance is not a guarantee of future results.

THERE IS A STEINWAY PIANO FOR EVERYONE; YOU JUST HAVE TO FIND YOUR STEINWAY

Selecting a Steinway piano should be an enjoyable experience, and to help insure it is, here is a list of 5 things to do while shopping for a used Steinway piano:

PLAY A NEW STEINWAY PIANO

You may have already made your mind up that purchasing a used Steinway piano is the right choice for you. However, you would be doing your due diligence to visit your local Steinway dealer and play a couple of new Steinway pianos. This experience will give you something to compare against as you shop for a used Steinway.

WATCH "NOTE BY NOTE, THE MAKING OF STEINWAY L1037"

"Note by Note" is a feature-length independent documentary that follows the creation of a Steinway concert grand, #L1037—from the forest floor to concert hall. It explores the relationship between musician and instrument, chronicles the manufacturing process, and illustrates what makes each Steinway unique in this age of mass production.

TOUR THE STEINWAY FACTORY

Steinway & Sons has a factory in Long Island City, New York, and one in Hamburg, Germany, that build Steinway upright and grand pianos. Each factory offers a 3-hour tour to the public during the week. What better way to learn about Steinway pianos than to see first-hand how they are built? For more information and to schedule your factory tour, contact your authorized Steinway dealer.

READ "THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO STEINWAY PIANOS"

A compilation of thirty years of research by authors, Roy F. Kehl and David R. Kirkland, that offers a thorough and accurate production history of Steinway pianos. In this guide you will find the complete list of Steinway patents, Steinway models—past and present—with production dates and serial numbers, and the characteristic detail changes.

DOWNLOAD THE PIANO BUYER'S GUIDE

Choosing the right piano can be a very pleasant and rewarding experience for an informed buyer. This guide will assist you in educating yourself on how to select the right piano—based on your specific needs. To download the guide, visit steinway.com, hover your mouse pointer over "Our Pianos" and click on "Buyer's Guide."



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www.steinway.com
www.usedsteinwaypiano.com

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