

Want A Resolute Desk of Your Own?

Peter Klages, from Garching, Germany (pictured to the right), has been collecting John F. Kennedy since he was 19. He is now 62 years old and his fascination and commitment are still unchecked. When he had a solid professional foundation in his mid-40s, his two sons had moved out of the house and he was able to invest a bit of money in his hobby, he dreamed of having his own Kennedy room. His wife Sabine supported him, and acquisition of a replica of the Resolute Desk went to the top of the list.



During a hospital stay where he had plenty of time, he began researching. In doing so, he made a very surprising discovery. There was a manufacturer of the Resolute Desk in Germany who also delivered to the United States. Because of this, he got his Resolute Desk for about 1/3 of the cost in the USA.

Over time, he also wanted authentic and "valuable" pieces from the period and actually from President Kennedy, not just memorabilia. His collection became very extensive, including over 500 coins and medals. In addition to these items, his collection also includes busts, posters, images and portraits, paintings, campaign buttons & literature, and much more. The space to display all these beautiful things was becoming increasingly scarce. Actually, he reported, there was no more space.

Then by chance he came across the website of a Canadian collector who has set up his own oval office and bought the individual utensils on Kennedy's desk as replicas or reproduced as close to the originals as possible. (www.jfkdeskcanada.com) and that became his immediate passion.



While searching for the JFK telephone (left) and lamp (right), Peter came in contact with John R. White from Knoxville, Tennessee. He too has a passion for everything that was on Kennedy's desk, although he prefers to use the desk that his parents gave him as a gift when he was young. (See photo, next page).



One problem of course is the fact that when the 'next model' telephone came out, the previous one was discontinued and any leftover stock by the manufacturers were reduced to the 'spare parts' level and the existing units were often discarded for newer phones. And after a period of years, the old ones disappear because the operating (telephone) systems have advanced.

Peter became very enthusiastic about this idea and from then on he began to research, especially for the telephone and the desk lamp (a Hercolite Executive model). The Canadian collector's page and a page from the JFK Library (www.jfkpresidentsdesk.org) became his orientation aid and guide.



Peter Klages sitting at his Kennedy desk in his office.

In his search, he contacted yet another possible source:

www.phonecoinc.com from Galesville, Wisconsin which was recommended by the Canadian collector.

This company has been involved in the restoration and trading of old telephones for decades.

Among other things, they also provide equipment and props for many film productions and historical films.

After what seemed like endless emails and phone calls, a message finally came from Galesville:

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The phone he had been looking for was found in a barn on private property.

The phone finally arrived at his home on March 8th. Peter is now looking for someone to convert this phone so it can be connected to the German telephone system and actually be put into operation. So far as the telephone and lamp, he has found that it is almost impossible to find an exact model that is 100% the same as those which President Kennedy had on his desk.

The similarities - in terms of appearance and function - of Klages' telephone comes extremely close to the original, but the search continues for a model of the "Hercolite" desk lamp. Peter has already received about 50 negative responses. But of course he doesn't think about giving up. Pictured below are the other



John R. White's Canadian Resolute Desk reproduction

views of Peter Klages' office.



Asked how he felt sitting behind his own Resolute Desk, Peter replied:

For me, my Kennedy room and the Resolute Desk in the office are something very special. I am here in the midst of things that I have accumulated from around the world over 45 years, and that means so much to me. I have a lot of unique items on my Resolute Desk, just like the original on JFK's desk more than 60 years ago in the Oval Office. Working at my Resolute Desk gives me a very special feeling of inspiration, creativity and happiness. Somehow you feel very close to John F. Kennedy and the 1960s. It is a special feeling that has a lot to do with satisfaction and happiness. My Kennedy office and the Resolute Desk are both a place of retreat and a creative workshop for me.

I have my "favorite piece" right behind my chair on the wall: a portrait of John F. Kennedy in oil from the 1960s. There are so many emotions and wonderful memories attached to this picture. The picture was offered to me by telephone in the early 80s, after a newspaper article on the 20th anniversary of John F. Kennedy's death, by an employee of the US embassy (I think from Cologne). We phoned several times, but the asking price was beyond my possibilities at the time, even though the portrait was well worth it. I told my father (now 83) about the phone call with the embassy. At some point the US ambassador (or employee) explained to me in one of the following phone calls that the picture was no longer available and was sold to a US citizen That was annoying and sad at the same time. On the following Christmas everything was cleared up when my father surprised me with this oil painting. What happened? Immediately after I told my father about the story surrounding this picture, he contacted the embassy, bought the picture himself and asked the people at the embassy to tell me that the picture had been sold elsewhere ... Since then, for 40 years now, this picture hangs with me and John F. Kennedy looks over me at my desk.



This JFK portrait is Peter's favorite item from his entire collection.

It hangs on the wall behind him in the page 11 photo.

