

On March 9, 1959, teenage fashion model Barbie Millicent Roberts from Willows, Wisconsin, made her debut at the American Toy Fair. Barbie quickly became one of the most recognizable dolls ever created, sought after by young girls and collectors alike. A recent sale of Barbie dolls by Apple Tree Auction Center of Newark, Ohio, included a group of vintage Barbie dolls. Top-selling Barbie was a 1960 No. 3 Ponytail Barbie doll that sold for \$1,239. This Barbie had the same strapless black and white striped bathing suit and poodle curl ponytail as the No. 1 and No. 2 dolls, but featured more life-like blue eyes, had two earring variations and wore either brown or blue eyeliner.

Limited editions are wanted, but vintage Barbie dolls made from 1959 to 1969 are the most bought by collectors. Earlier Barbies usually bring the highest prices. Vintage Barbie dolls are grouped into two main categories: Vintage Era (1959–1966) and Mod Era (1967–1972).

BRUNETTE PONYTAIL NO. 3 BARBIE DOLL, original swimsuit, black mules and sunglasses, (bottom of ponytail has been rebanded), **\$1,239.**



BLOND AMERICAN GIRL BARBIE DOLL, (lip paint restored), wearing Vacation Time ensemble No. 1623 (missing camera), **\$189.**



TRANSITIONAL BLOND AMERICAN GIRL BARBIE DOLL, wearing Pretty as a Picture ensemble No. 1652, **\$325.**



One of the last models of the Vintage Era of Barbie dolls was American Girl Barbie. The American Girl model had more makeup and a new, trendy, sleek bob with bangs. The most notable feature of American Girl Barbie was bendable legs, so she was originally named “Bendable Leg Barbie.” Barbie’s ensembles in the 1600 Series of fashions released along with American Girl are valued by collectors for their elegance and details.

An American Girl Barbie wearing a light pink textured, woven skirt set with satin accents, an ensemble notoriously hard to find in mint condition with all pieces, sold for \$531 (pictured on cover). Another American Girl Barbie sold for \$189. She is wearing the 1965 pink sweater and checkered shorts vacation outfit, although she’s missing the camera that came with the original set. An American Girl Barbie wearing a black and white skirt with a matching large brimmed hat sold for \$325. This doll is “transitional,” meaning that her skin color is not uniform throughout her whole body. Mattel often cross-utilized body parts to create Barbie dolls.

Entering Barbie’s Mod Era, the Twist ‘n Turn model was the first to be released in 1967. “TNT” Barbie got a complete makeover with a new face, hairstyle and, most notably, body. In addition to her new bendable legs, Barbie’s head and waist could now twist and turn. A titian Twist ‘n Turn Barbie sold for \$295. She was wearing one of the ensembles most prized by collectors, but it was missing its gold-belted trench coat.

Almost a decade after her introduction, Barbie got a voice of her own—literally. Talking Barbie hit the market in 1968. She spoke when a string at the back of her neck was pulled. Barbie talked about her friends, fashion and going to the prom. This was also the first version of Barbie to have individual fingers. A brunette Talking Barbie from 1969 in her original outfit sold for \$201. Unfortunately, this Barbie had lost her voice or her price would have been much higher.

All prices include buyer’s premium.

Pictured on Cover

AMERICAN GIRL BARBIE DOLL, (traces of original toenail polish), wearing complete Fashion Luncheon ensemble No. 1656, **\$531.**



BLOND PONYTAIL NO. 4 BARBIE DOLL, hair in original set, rare blush on cheeks, wearing non-Mattel prototype 1960s dress, tag, **\$418.**

Although the 1961 No. 4 Ponytail Barbie looked just like the previous three at first glance, they were made differently. Mattel began using a new plastic on No. 4 dolls which prevented skin color fading, and they’ve aged well in their 60 years in circulation. A blond No. 4 Ponytail Barbie auctioned for \$418. The doll may have sold for more if she’d had her original black and white striped bathing suit or a Mattel-made numbered Barbie outfit.

As Barbie progressed into the 1960s, like many American women of the era, her new fashion style was influenced by Jackie Kennedy. Enter Bubble Cut Barbie, made from 1961 to 1967. These dolls featured a short, bouffant hair style and introduced a new hair color: Titian. These red-haired dolls are particularly prized. A Bubble Cut Barbie with titian hair, a floral dress and red shoes sold for \$118. In 1964, Mattel added 16 new ensembles to Barbie’s wardrobe, in addition to the 24 from the previous five years. The floral “On the Go” dress this doll was wearing was one of those new styles.

TITIAN TWIST ‘N TURN BARBIE DOLL, hair in original set, wearing Intrigue ensemble No. 1470 (missing coat and belt), **\$295.**



TITIAN BUBBLECUT BARBIE DOLL, wearing 1964 floral On the Go Fashion Pak dress with red shoes, **\$118.**



BRUNETTE TALKING BARBIE DOLL, 1969, (not able to speak), wearing original swimsuit with hard-to-find light pink hair ribbons, **\$201.**

