National Capital Radio & Television Museum

Artifact of the Week:

Zenith
Model H3477R Console



Early cathode ray tubes (CRTs or "picture tubes") were round, but most TV set makers put plastic masks around them to make the pictures look rectangular. (Decades before flat panel TVs became common, most CRTs had evolved to rectangular shape.) Around 1950 Zenith did not follow the crowd and preferred to let its round tubes show. Consequently, Zenith TVs of this era, like this Model H3477R with an 18-inch diameter CRT, were described as "porthole" sets.



This combination AM/FM radio/phono/B&W television is an example of an upscale model. Its doors could be closed when the set was not in use. "Mid-century modern" designs with blonde finish were popular at the time.

The four-speed record changer (16, 33⅓, 45, and 78 rpm), housed in the pull-out drawer just under the radio, was called the "Cobramatic" model because the end of the tone arm was shaped like a snake's head. The lower left compartment was for record storage.

This set has been restored to working condition, but its picture tube is on the dim side.

We appreciate your support of the museum so that historical artifacts like this one, and the stories that go with them, can be preserved for future generations. THANKS!