



Going Once, Going Twice

We're sold on Andrew Turner's East Bottoms auction house

STORY AND PHOTO BY LINDSEY KENNEDY

Andrew Turner doesn't run your typical auction house. His weekly consignment auction events have music playing, free coffee, lots of fascinating "stuff" and a refreshingly laidback attitude. "When most people picture an auction/auctioneer, they envision a guy in a cowboy hat ... or super stuffy black-tie types," Turner says. "We're not like that, although we certainly have elements from each; it's a no-frills attitude down here."

Turner has been in the auction and consignment business in various capacities for over a decade. "I've always...considered collectibles to be a tangible link," he says. "It's humbling to hold something in your hand—say, a WWII helmet or uniform—and consider your proximity to history."

Historically significant items aren't the only fare at Turner's auctions, though, and the extreme variety is part of what sets them apart from other consignment opportunities. "We don't limit ourselves to one specific category," he says. "We may have sterling silver and gold or several pieces of fine art. In the same auction, we have a riding lawn mower, washer and dryer or sports autographs."

The auctions begin with a preview hour when potential buyers have a chance to check out the inventory. Items also are available

to view in advance on the website, atakc.com. At 6 p.m., when the last buyers make it through the registration line, Turner starts his introduction speech and then the auction chant begins. "It doesn't stop for at least four hours," he remarks. "We generally sell 400 to 500 different lots a night."

There are many advantages to buying at a live auction. For instance, unlike the online auction experience, buyers may physically examine items before they bid and can also avoid markups. Turner describes it as an "upscale resale" shop similar to those frequented during First Fridays events. "We're actually where a large majority of those vendors find their items," Turner says. "They buy here and mark it up 300 percent or more, but those vendors also spend their time sitting through an auction and often repair/restore items."

The auctions are held almost every Thursday evening at 1801 Guinotte in the East Bottoms. They tend to draw a diverse crowd of 100-150 people. "Just the sights and sounds of an auction stimulate the senses like nothing else," Turner says. "It's also neat just to see what [price] things sell for—someone might be surprised that a crystal vase sells for \$15 dollars, while a Rock-em Sock-em Robots game from the '70s brings [in] \$300." **KCB**