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# DÉCOR

## Thrill of the Hunt One-of-a-Kind Finds at Garage Sales and Flea Markets

*“William Morris once wrote, ‘Have nothing in your homes that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.’ I try to live by that motto.”*  
– Chantelle Butterfield, interior designer & professional shopper

Summer is here and garage sale signs are popping up overnight like fields of daisies on every street corner. The temptation to hunt for treasures is overwhelming, whether you dig through your neighbour’s castoffs or search at thrift shops or recycling depots.

Gems can be restored and repurposed to add a stylish and inventive touch to your own décor. Finding a deal is thrilling, but try to avoid making your home look like a perpetual garage sale.

“There’s no better place to find ‘gold’ than at a flea market or a good neighbourhood garage sale,” says interior designer Chantelle Butterfield, owner of Funktional Space, who fairly glows at the prospect of the new foraging season.

Butterfield particularly likes looking for old frames and transforming them into decorative accents for the home.

Ornate gold frames, for example, can be painted a more modern silver. Insert a mirror



Amazing treasures can be found at fleamarkets and garage sales and transformed into unique decor items.

into the newly-painted frame, and you have an elegant piece for the hallway.

“If you find a style of wallpaper you absolutely love but aren’t quite ready to cover an entire wall with,” adds Butterfield, “place a swatch over a tired old picture or poster, put it in an old frame and, voila!” Another unique wall accent.

Tami Nykiforuk of Revive Home Staging and Design, an interior designer and Saskatoon’s first accredited staging

professional, says that even the good deals you find at flea markets and garage sales have to be useful.

“You don’t usually go looking for anything in particular. It’s fun and cheap!” she says. “But it’s only a bargain if you really love it and you’re actually going to use it.”

Nykiforuk has a few tips for wanna-be interior decorators who love the thrill of the hunt:

- Be selective. Don’t buy it just because it’s cheap. It needs to have a reason or a purpose.
- Ask if lamps and appliances actually work. Plug things in.
- Is it fixable, paintable, cleanable?
- Can it be glued, screwed or re-upholstered?
- Be creative and open-minded. Think of different and unusual ways to use things.
- A few off-the-wall pieces can be attention grabbers but don’t over-do it!
- Don’t be shy to ask for a better deal. Do you still want it?
- Shop early for best selection. Shop late for the best prices.

Found *objets d’art* are as limitless as the projects you may create. According to Butterfield, if you shop using the four R’s—reduce, reuse, rethink and recycle—you could end up with something funky and completely unique for which many people would pay handsomely.

“With so many of us changing our interior décor, we have an abundance of accessories,” says Butterfield. The trick, she adds, is to not just develop an eye for items that will enhance your space, but to free up space in which to put them.

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"Have your own garage sale or give things to charity to free up valuable space," she advises. Charity and thrift shops she adds, are infested with items that deserve a second look.

Theresa Torgunrud is a professional home organizer and runs In Place Organizing. "Collecting and attractively displaying items that resonate with us is an important part of making a house a home," she says. But just getting *more* makes displaying those things difficult.

"Garage sales are potential treasure chests. It's a good idea to move something out whenever you bring in something 'new.' Change your focus," she advises, "to appreciating what you have rather than always wanting more."

Learning how to display

items can also help avoid the feel and look of clutter. "If your decorating style is eclectic," says Torgunrud, "the possibilities are nearly endless as you incorporate meaningful objects into any area of the home. If items are of a distinctly different character than a desired look and feel of a room, devote a place to presenting them together in one place."

Garage sales and flea markets can be a fun way to spend an afternoon and an inexpensive source of interesting accessories, but be careful.

"We're all guilty of getting caught up in the spirit of junk sales," says Nykiforuk. "The good thing is, you only paid a dollar for it in the first place so you can always put it in your own yard sale next year!"

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