



"On The Road"

While practicing my art of excursions and rummaging, I was sitting on a beach one day by the waters of Vancouver, BC. It's a beautiful place and one that should not be missed for a variety of reasons. But this particular trip was exceptionally rewarding since I took the extra time to wander the vast canyons of antique laden streets to work my tourist magic on the shopkeepers.

I soon found there are as many antiques stores as there are Canadians. I think you're born owning a shop there but for the antique loving community it's a treasure trove of fun and fulfillment. Being a collector of scales and all that go with them, I was most pleased to find that US Customs was going to get a workout going through my luggage. An old candy scale (more on this in a minute), an antique pharmacy scale with an original hand painted porcelain plate and an old chemistry scale were soon replacing sweaters and that extra pair of walking shoes in my suitcase.

One thing I found all over Vancouver was the overwhelming numbers of the most terrific, fun and helpful people I've ever run into during my travels. Back to the candy scale... it has the most graceful and curved porcelain numbering markings but alas because of its age there were some chips and missing gradations. It worked great - just looked a bit worn, but I had to have it - no question - for this was to be the most unique piece in my collection.

The store owner then pulled out that dog eared book of personal resources and told me to go down two blocks, turn left, up the alley, over a small bridge and through the woods. Ya Da ya Da ya Da... and there I would find a most experienced craftsman who could solve my new scale's cosmetic problems. I made the trek a few blocks away and found Winston's. I went up the old stairs, found the genius who was about to transform my find and we struck up a nice conversation.

He took my piece, said he could repair the porcelain, repaint the missing markings and would be happy to ship it to me in a couple weeks. Sure, I'm from out of town - a foreign country even, you don't know my mother, you're taking my money, and you'll call me in the morning. But there's a lesson to be learned here. His shop bespoke his craftsmanship. His demeanor was calm and relaxed. His own collections of the rare and unusual combined with the recommendation of another well run shoppe were enough to gain my trust.

Three weeks later - without even a follow up phone call - brought UPS and my very nice looking



My point to all this? When I travel I look for three things. 1) a quiet place to relax and read (yes I can read), 2) some great food and wine (with jazz if possible) and 3) the unusual, out of the way and fun antique shops to help fill up the

few empty spaces I have left in my home. I do some research before I go. I plan a little adventure around the town usually hunting for those "antique areas" where I can walk for blocks without a car. I talk to the owners - not just to buy things but to get a feeling for the town, great places to chow down, other dealers, fun finds and all to do something everyone should be doing... to ENJOY my time antiquing. I'm not just out looking for rare milk bottles that once held the rum of a half blind, parrot toting Caribbean pirate, but things that complete my current collection and meeting the people who make it interesting so I can also learn.

After a day of scurrying around then I go and find somewhere like Bridges on Granville Island where I can sit on the water, have a nice meal, a wonderful Chianti (no fava beans), or maybe a great Long Island ice tea, and reflect on the soon to be shipped new piece for my mantle.

Life doesn't get much better. But... we keep trying.

Mo lata.... Harry

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