

Shopping off the grid for bargains

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Ever wonder how the palatial homes of our Piedmont and our horse-y dressed folk get that drop-dead gorgeous, hunt country style?

Lots of money, you say. Sure, some.

But for most, it's shopping off the grid where good taste and style meet low cost. That's the key—low cost.

You already shop the sales to get the best bargains, use coupons and go to the big box stores to buy in bulk, but if you're game, get off the grid to fill your life with all the stuff that turns a subdivision home into a country estate.

I write this with great hesitation. Part of me wants to keep my favorite haunts a secret so I stay privy to bargains. But another part of me wants to shout these fab places from the house tops (or in the case of Fauquier country—barn tops) so you can save a bundle and snap up bargains galore. I'll share these places with you, but don't tell anyone else. Promise?

Home Furnishings

What's the difference between used furniture and antiques?

Perception.

Many elegant hunt country homes are filled with family furniture—passed down from generation to generation.

While we think of these homes as filled with antiques, you could also say they're filled with used furniture. It's just the way you look at things.

If you're looking for blue blood on a budget check out the following.

The White Elephant

(Warrenton and Middleburg) is the consignment shop of all consignment shops. The White Elephant has built a solid reputation for elegance and style.

Not your ordinary secondhand shop, it's a well laid out showroom with bargain basement prices and quick turnaround. Things that don't sell during the 30 days they're allowed to be on the showroom floor often wind up around the corner from the Warrenton store at the WExchange for half off or more. The WExchange is the charity arm of The White Elephant.

Recently I got a yummy, chartreuse, satin brocade, federal style couch for \$150 and two Federal, blue wing chairs for \$75 each. The couch was easily worth \$3,000 and the chairs about \$500 each.

Everybody sells stuff at the White Elephant. You're just as likely to come across acres of furniture from model homes or hotels as you are one-of-a-kind estate pieces. Get it when you see it, because it won't be there when you go back.

Prices are set by the sellers (The White Elephant is a consignment store), so prices can vary and like all off the grid shops, you have to shop it often. The White Elephant is the place for furniture, artwork, knick-knacks and surprises.

Bring your own pick-up or SUV to haul away your loot.

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