

# UNCOVERING THE NORTH COUNTRY'S HIDDEN TREASURES

From a vintage boutique to a consignment store with heart to the antique show of the summer, the region offers plenteous options for shoppers on the prowl.

By **Holly Riddle**

Whether you're on the hunt for local memorabilia, high-quality clothes (both vintage and otherwise) or taxidermy worthy of an Adirondack Great Camp, there are a wealth of places you can visit throughout the North Country to find all sorts of once-loved, pre-owned items. Antique shops and thrift stores dot the landscape, hiding their treasures for those lucky enough to stumble across them. So where should you begin the search? Here are four special options to consider and some expert-approved tips for getting the best deal possible.

## FIND SOMETHING "SUPER-UNIQUE" IN THIS REPURPOSED DAIRY BARN

In West Chazy, it's difficult to miss Red Rooster Market and the bright red building that was once a dairy barn. Owner Elizabeth Strack opened the market in 2012, starting with just five vendor booths; today, she has 50. A lot of those vendors have been at the market for over a decade and base their entire operations there.

"My grandfather had passed away, and we were just left with this empty dairy barn," she described. "I saw a lot of potential for the space and that there was a need in the community for a place for small businesses and resellers to come together without having to start their own brick-and-mortar stores, which can be a big commitment. We're a month-to-month rental option where someone can come in as a hobbyist or a micro-business and get their feet wet."

Right away, Strack noticed a demand for quality antiques and vintage items.



Photos provided



"We always have something super-unique and that can bring character to your home — something that your neighbors aren't going to have," said Strack.

The market is truly a family and community-oriented business. It's not uncommon to see Strack's father or brother there, there are plenty of regular customers that stop in on a weekly basis and vendors live as close by as just down the road. At the same time, the market also attracts collectors who make a point of stopping at the market when driving cross-country or throughout the region.

Vendors currently sell a mix of one-of-a-kind items, with a lot of furniture, vintage kitchenware, décor and vintage jewelry. There are a few items, though, that Strack says, if you see them, you should snap them up before they're gone.

"Local memorabilia from the North Country," she said. "There's so much history in Clinton County, in Franklin County, in the North Country...Glass bottles from the area's [local farms], local advertisements from mom-and-pop shops — those usually don't even hit the floor... There's just so much history. When you find those items, whether it's at a garage sale or an antique shop, and it has the name of the town, definitely snap it up, because there's a market for it, for sure."

## INDULGE IN A LITTLE VINTAGE LUXURY

Laura Traudt, owner of Laura's Vintage in Glens Falls, started collecting vintage clothing and accessories from a young age, and then eventually turned her hobby into a business. She's now been selling highly curated vintage wear for more than 20 years.

"I source everything locally and I'm really fussy about what I include in my collection... I'm probably the fussiest vintage lady you'll ever meet. I make very few exceptions for flaws. I'm looking for the best of the best," she described.

This emphasis on quality has resulted in a boutique-style shop that's both welcoming and a little luxurious, where both locals and visitors know they can reliably find gorgeous, cherry-picked pieces that they can take right off the rack and wear immediately, incorporating attire from the 1950s through the 1990s into their wardrobes.

"I'm all about wearable," Traudt explained. "I'm not looking for museum pieces that are so delicate they can only hang on a mannequin. You can come in, buy a dress from me and wear it to the party that night."

Even for those who might not be on the search for a 1950s party dress, though, can still find a lot to love at Laura's Vintage. Traudt noted that her array of vintage jewelry attracts shoppers looking for the perfect accessory to go with a prom dress or wedding gown. More recently, she's noticed an uptick in shoppers looking for vintage broaches, as they've gained more traction on red carpets and runways. She also has a "fantastic" selection of hats that draws collectors.

If, though, you are looking for a piece of clothing, Traudt advises knowing your measurements before you begin shopping, as clothing sizes have changed dramatically over the decades.

Otherwise, she said, "When shopping for vintage...look for colors and styles that appeal to you. Think of mixing it in with the wardrobe you currently have. I don't think it's good to dress like you're going to a costume party. You want to modernize the look... Look at your wardrobe as if it's building blocks. You don't want to have buy everything to go with that one outfit. You want to buy things that you can really mix in."



## SHOP AT A CONSIGNMENT STORE WITH A GREATER PURPOSE

At Mountain Lake Consignment in Port Henry, the focus is decidedly not vintage, but it is still very much concerned with high quality, both in terms of the clothing you'll find and the shopping experience. Not your typical consignment store, the shop has more of a boutique feel and every purchase supports the community in a significant way.

Mountain Lake Consignment is part of Mountain Lake Services, an organization dedicated to helping people of all abilities live their best lives. The shop provides pre-employment opportunities for the organization's program participants, where they learn valuable social, communication and other soft skills that can serve them in the future. Simultaneously, the store provides a much-needed additional shopping opportunity in Port Henry.





"The interaction between the customers and [program participants] is great. Customers not only are coming in for a shopping experience. They're coming in to learn about our participants. They're making friendships and developing community connections," described Linell Decker, store manager.

The store and consigners split the store's income 70–30, with Mountain Lake Services' 70% invested back into the space and teaching pre-vocational skills. Consigners are held to a high standard, with the store prioritizing in-demand, name-brand and very high-quality secondhand items. Think a range of clothing, including hiking wear and athleisure, from brands like Patagonia, The North Face and Nike.

"Our customer feedback has been outstanding. The store as a whole is a really cool place," said Steve Lewis, senior director of Mountain Lake Services. All the while, he continued, prices are designed to match the local market. "We're not looking for outrageous profit. Our main purpose really is to teach vocational skills... I don't know how to best describe the growth that we see in the people we support. They're coming from a shy place or may have spatial boundaries, but then you see people grow right in front of you and it's addicting. It's amazing."

### DON'T MISS THE ANTIQUING EVENT OF THE SUMMER

Any serious antiquer or thrifter knows that, if you see something you want, you'd better snag it, because you never know if it'll be there the next time — and in some cases, you may have less time than you think.

The recently revived Saranac Lake Antique Show & Sale is only in town for two days this summer, July 18–19. A once long-standing tradition in the North Country, the annual event abruptly ended in the mid-2000s, until last year, when Mike Meadows and Jeff Molloy brought the event back. Held in the Saranac Lake Civic Center, last year's event attracted around a thousand attendees, and the two promise that this year's event will be even better, with its wealth of carefully vetted vendors coming from across the region and country to hawk their wares.

"It's a great show," said Meadows. "This is the show of the summer in the Adirondacks."

Molloy added, "Everything is quality. This is not a flea market. We'll have 10,000 square feet of antiques with vendors from Maine to Pennsylvania to the Midwest, and the local area, of course."

The two men know their antiques. Meadows works full-time in the antique business and owns Folk Lodge Antiques, while Molloy owns Red Canoe Antiques, both in Saranac Lake — and if you stop by the show to casually browse, they

have a few words of advice.

"Buy what you love," said Molloy, "because you'll never be disappointed... If you're just buying because something might be worth [more] in five years, you might be very disappointed."

"The name of the game is asking yourself, 'Is it exceptional?'" posed Meadows. "Is it an exceptional piece that I can live with for the next 20 years?"

"It's all customer specific. It's all personal. What one person loves, another person is horrified by," Molloy continued. "With antiques, there's a shoe for every foot."

And at the Saranac Lake Antique Show & Sale, you might just find the "shoe" you're looking for.



### LEARN MORE AND START SHOPPING

#### The Red Rooster Market

2412 Military Turnpike, West Chazy  
facebook.com/RedRoosterMkt

#### Laura's Vintage

19 Ridge Street, Glens Falls  
facebook.com/laurasvintageglensfallsny

#### Mountain Lake Consignment

4300 Main Street, Port Henry  
facebook.com/mtlakeconsignment

#### Saranac Lake Antique Show & Sale

July 18–19 - Saranac Lake Civic Center  
213 Ampersand Ave, Saranac Lake  
www.saranaclakeantiqueshow.com

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