

Garage Sale Gal **THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC**



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Door Art ***Lynda Hammond***

When most of us see a door chances are we assume it's something to walk through, right? But when Lee Weinstein spots one he sees something quite different. "I just love it. Every time I walk in, I see it and I think 'It's our best find ever'," Lee says.

Yep, Lee's favorite bargain find is an old barn door. Lying down it graces the middle of his family room with books and knick knacks sitting on top. That door is now a coffee table with fence posts cut in half for legs. Lee and his wife, June found the nearly 7 ft. tall door with glass panes and remnants of old light green paint for just \$50 at a second-hand store in Scottsdale. "We knew the second we saw it that we had to have it. "We were going to use it as a picnic table but it works much better like this. I just love the creativity of it."

The Scottsdale residents often shop garage sales, flea markets and antique stores for everyday common objects and turn them into works of art. For example, old wooden window frames become wall art, colorful hatboxes are stacked high in the entryway niche, antique console radios are tables and colorful, vintage dishes adorn the kitchen wall.

I met Lee at his recent neighborhood garage sale. (He had to get rid of some of the old to make room for the new!) He's so enthusiastic about his bargains that when he meets another garage sale fanatic like me, within minutes we're no longer looking at stuff for sale in the driveway---we're touring his house which happens to be full of just about anything that "isn't" retail. "To me that's half the fun. I love having garage sales and then taking people inside and showing them all the great finds I've discovered over the years."

Lee and his family moved to the Valley from New York five years ago to "slow down and enjoy life". And for them a big part of smelling the roses includes finding bargains at garage sales. Each weekend he and June look for new things to start collecting or add to their current collections which include Depression glass and Fiestaware dishes—old ones from the '30s and '40s. A few years ago they were using the tableware each night at dinner time---that is until they found out how valuable they are. "I thought 'Oh, my gosh' we've been eating off of these? Well, not anymore." Some of the older Fiestaware can go for \$20 for a plate and \$500 and up for a

vase. But the Weinsteins still enjoy their collection and see it every day. The dishes-- with their signature bright colors of red, yellow, orange and green-- are now displayed on the wall above the kitchen cabinets.

And although the Weinsteins enjoy hunting for bargains together, Lee admits *he's* the die-hard collector in the family. "We have "discussions" about it. I do collect a lot of junk and sometimes June would just as soon throw it away. But I find an excuse to have it."

Lee's also passionate about...tooth paste. Yes, sounds odd but you see Lee's a pediatric dentist so he decorates his office with tubes of tooth paste (unused, still in the box) he finds at garage sales. Out of his 250 tubes, the one from Singapore is his favorite. He found the old tube of paste—from the 1950s-- for \$2 at a garage sale in Connecticut.



(pic provided by Lynda Hammond) Lee Weinstein shows off his old barn door-turned coffee table. The Scottsdale resident decorates his home and dental office with garage sale and other bargain finds.

Talk to the Garage Sale Gal!

Do you have a question or comment about garage or estate bargain sales? Email the Garage Sale Gal: Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com.

Lynda Hammond is a former television anchor who left the anchor desk for the love of garage sales. Contact her at Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. Lynda also does garage sale segments on local TV stations.

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