

NOVEMBER 22, 2011, 10:18 AM

Ask an Expert: Where to Find Treasure in Trash

By *RACHEL LEE HARRIS*

AMY HUGHES turns junk into treasure.

Sarah Wilson

For her “[Salvage Style](#)” column in *This Old House* magazine, she digs through the salvage yards of America, looking for door frames to repurpose into bookshelves or vintage tin ceiling panels to turn into planters. She has also become an expert at turning work excursions into weekend getaways. Here are excerpts of Ms. Hughes’s comments about her favorite hunting grounds.

Gonzales, Tex.

My absolute favorite salvaging trip was to a place called **Discovery Architectural Antiques** in this really small town about an hour’s drive from [Austin](#). It’s a huge warehouse packed with hundreds of thousands of feet of flooring and old doors, plus a mill, workshop and retail store. ([discoverys.net](#))

About 15 minutes away is this really cool town, Luling, and an awesome barbecue place, **Luling City Market**. You walk through the smokehouse to pick up your meat. It’s down and dirty. Paper plates and brisket wrapped in wax paper. ([lulingcitymarket.com](#))

Part of the great thing about visiting Discovery is that you can stay in Austin. Stay at the **Hotel San Jose** and go to the **Continental Club**, right across the street. ([sanjosehotel.com](#); [www.continentalclub.com](#))

Mount Dora, Fla.

This town was new for me. **Renninger’s Antiques Extravanzas**, which take place a few times throughout the year, are well known among collectors, but not among those who just enjoy antiquing or junking. The prices are incredible. ([renningers.com/dora](#))

But the real draw is the tiny little vintage town with gorgeous Victorian-era homes, great restaurants and a square where they play live [music](#). There are these giant oak trees just dripping with Spanish moss. There’s this gorgeous hotel, called the **Lakeside Inn**. ([lakeside-inn.com](#))

Harlem

Demolition Depot is my local salvage yard and I love them for their architectural ornament. They have fragments from the Audubon Ballroom. ([demolitiondepot.com](#))

If you’re going, you’ve got to have drinks and appetizers at **Red Rooster Harlem**. The front of the house is really where the fun is. It’s great people watching, with crab cakes and cornbread.

(redroosterharlem.com)

A little north, in Washington Heights, the **United Palace Theater** is one of the last great Loews “wonder theaters” from the 1920s, with an amalgam of styles: Moorish and Indian and Greek neo-classical, all blended together under gold gilt.

It’s a house of worship during the day, but the doors are open and you can go in, and at night there are concerts.

Roanoke, Va.

I really like **Black Dog Salvage**. They have great ironwork. (blackdogsalvage.com)

But it’s such a cool little town, too. I stayed at the **Hotel Roanoke**, which is a restored Tudor-style hotel, walking distance to downtown. (hotelroanoke.com)

In the historic district, you can sit outside of the **Wildflour Market and Bakery** with a glass of wine and some sandwiches. And **Pop’s Ice Cream and Soda Bar** has a great vintage-y feel. (wildflour4thst.com; facebook.com/popsicecream)

There’s a lot of [hiking](#) and [biking](#) going on with the **Appalachian Trail** right there. Or you could hike to the Roanoke Star, a huge neon star at the top of Mill Mountain. It’s a great place to view the valley. (appalachiantrail.org)