

President's Day Weekend in The Antique Capital of California

Written by Julie Smith

Orange is renowned for being the hub of the antique community. There are countless treasures waiting to be discovered in the more than 35 antique stores in Old Towne alone. It makes sense that Orange is home to many antique dealers because of its historic sense of nostalgia. The Plaza, which was once the commercial, civic and social center of the community, is now a symbolic reminder of its former self. The renovation, although sometimes frustrating for the business community, is also a reminder of the communal pride demanding preservation of the Plaza's beauty.

Orange was originally an agricultural community, growing prosperous thanks to its citrus gold mine. Although it was founded in 1871, Orange did not see suburban communities until the 1950s. As more people began to arrive in Orange, commercial growth flourished. Commercial growth in downtown diminished as the national chains left. Fortunately, downtown Orange was discovered by antique dealers who appreciated Orange's history. In 1962, the first antique store opened at 221 S. Glassell. By the mid-1970s, downtown was teeming with antique dealers. This led to the formation of the Old Orange Antique Dealers Association, which gave birth to the time-honored Antique Faire. It is traditionally held every President's Day Weekend. This year the dates are February 16, 17 and 18.

The Annual Antique Faire is a time when merchants have special

merchandise, events and sales. Every store will participate in its own unique way, so for the antique lover, it is an event that cannot be missed. There are several special events planned for such as a group performing Civil War re-enactments in full uniform with cannons. Also, the Southern California Band Association will have calliope players stationed in the Plaza Park, outside of the Antique Station, and outside of Happiness by the Bushel. The streets of Old Towne will also be welcoming an honored guest. Former President Abraham Lincoln can be seen walking the streets on Saturday February 16th. This is just a glimpse of the many activities which will be occurring during the Antique Faire. Since all of the stores will be participating in the Faire, the biggest draw will be the unique merchandise. Some stores will have appraisers available for the public as well as games and prizes.

For those of you who are not familiar with the variety of antiques available, the following is an overview of most of the stores that will be participating.

The Antique Station is an antique mall in Old Towne with over 100 dealers and a quite large range of merchandise. **Riley's Jewelry Services** is located there so they can also repair and personalize jewelry. You can even watch the jeweler as they work on your piece. Many eras are covered within the range of merchandise such as Victorian, 1950's American memorabilia, Americana and Country. The size of

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the merchandise also varies from a tiny Howdy Doody figurine to a 6 foot walnut dining table. Often the different dealers have themes to their selection. One interesting theme was "Hawaii". Within this space were different Hawaiian artifacts, memorabilia, home decorations, etc. Shopping in antique malls can be overwhelming because of the variety of items on display. However, for die-hard antiquers, this is only a minor obstacle in the search for a one-of-a-kind purchase. Some unique finds that I happened upon were a Princess Diana and Prince Charles Fashion Paper Dolls Book and Prince Albert in a can.

The Antique Depot is another antique mall in Old Towne Orange. It is two-stories with mostly furniture down stairs. There are a lot of mahogany, oak and walnut home furnishing as well as office furnishings. One unique piece which caught my eye, was a rotating file cabinet with about a hundred little drawers. I had never seen anything like it. This happens often when you're antique shopping. Sometimes we become so used to the mainstream merchandise you might find in the shopping malls, that the unique items really stand out.

Orange Circle Antique Mall, which has consistently been voted as the best antique store in Orange County, follows the same classifications as the previous two antique malls. It is a two-story shop with a variety of antiques. They have everything from I Love Lucy Memorabilia to Native American Art (two classifications which could not be further apart). I noticed a lot of books and magazines in the Orange Circle Antique Mall. For example, they have a collection of Life Magazines from 1937 - 1972, which are very interesting to look at to learn about monumental events from the past. Another discovery was of C'est Tres Chic Antique Chocolate Molds. For those who are habitually enticed by the nearby Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory, chocolate molds in the shape of cute animals may spark your interest. Besides, it would make a great Valentines day gift!

Antique malls are just the beginning of the full antique experience of Old Towne. There are about 20 other individual shops which carry eclectic items from various eras in time. One reoccurring era is that of a 1950's diner and entertainment theme. This can be seen in stores such as **Just for Fun**, American Heritage, Mulherin's Antiques

Antiques & Design



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and Woody's Furniture. In these stores, you can find Coca-Cola memorabilia, 50's diner booths and accessories, carnival games, gas station collectibles, 1950's appliances, drive-in memorabilia and gambling game tables (such as roulette and craps). **American Heritage** is one of the best places to find an extensive collection of these items, as well as old Sunbeam toasters and waffle irons that still work!

Mulherin's has somewhat smaller items such as keys, locks, jewelry, children's toys, glassware, pottery. An interesting theme in Mulherin's was of "professions" such as firefighting, law enforcement, military aviation, etc. They have authentic accessories such as badges, helmets and swords. They are giving discounts at the Antique Faire. **Woody's Furniture** carries wooden dressers, dining sets and bureaus by designers such as Heywood-Wakefield and Russel Wright from the 1940's through the 1960's. They also have a very unique collection of bedside lamps that match the era.

For those who are interested in the more traditional type of Victorian, French and English antiques, there are a variety of shops such as Attic Delights, George II, Someplace in Time, and Summerhill Ltd. **Attic Delights** carries vintage laces, linens, antiques and gifts. It contains all that the name encompasses "attic treasures" from a Victorian era. **George II** is characterized by mostly French and English home furnishings and collectibles. They carry beautiful ornately decorated wood furniture from the late 19th to mid 20th century. **Someplace in Time** is a quaint tea room and store which contains a plethora of Victorian clothing, dining sets, furniture, paintings, etc. During the Antique Faire (Saturday & Sunday only) there will be a certified appraiser available from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm, to give a free-verbal appraisal of antiques, furniture and jewelry. Each person is limited to 2 items per turn. **Summerhill Ltd.** focuses mainly on chandeliers, lighting and furniture. Most of their objects were designed by Hollywood Set Designer, David Lansing, and include distressed mirrors and painted chandeliers.

Another huge classification of antiques in Old Towne Orange is country antiques and folk art. Some shops that adhere to this genre include Country Roads, Down Home, Uncle Tom's and Happiness by the Bushel. **Country Roads Antiques and Gardens** is quite an enchanting store.

It consists of a maze of booths on the first level, each with their own roof, so it has the appearance of an old country town. It is imperative that you go up to the second floor to get a bird's eye view of the rustic roofs on the booths below. Outside is the garden with a captivating collection of fountains, pots and benches.

Not only will **Happiness by the Bushel** be the site of one of the calliope stations, they are also hosting two special events. This year is the 100th anniversary of the teddy bear, named after former president Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt. In celebration, Happiness by the Bushel will be displaying different types of teddy bears and premiering their commemorative 100th YEAR TEDDY BEAR BIRTHDAY button. There will also be a button trunk show in which dealer, Clare Bazley, will display her grand variety of buttons, some of which date back to the Victorian era.

Orange is home to two stores who appreciate the restoration hardware and architectural salvages from a time when things were made to last. They are Tony's Architectural Salvage and Muff's Restoration Hardware. Inside **Tony's Architectural Salvage** you can find exactly what the name implies, salvaged architectural materials. Tony's vast collection is unmatched in its variety of large items such as stained glass, statues, doors, fountains, fixtures and lights. It is definitely worth checking out. **Muff's Antiques** is an ideal place for those looking to repair or replace their own antique pieces without compromising its authenticity. They offer an accumulation of hard-to-find restoration hardware, such as door knobs, hinges, knockers and much more.

For those interested in California pottery, **Lucky Finds**, should be high on your list of places to visit during the Antique Faire. They have an impressive collection of classic California Pottery such as Hedi Schoop, Roseville, Rookwood, Weller, McCoy and others. They have a charming wall covered with wall pockets, which are very rare and quite beautiful. They carry a lot of Disney pottery memorabilia, which can also be classified as California pottery as well.

This year's Annual Antique Faire promises to inspire. It will be a truly traditional and fun event. So be sure to stop by and take advantage of the festivities and the sales on this Presidents' Day weekend. Have Fun! ●