



For the bedroom: A walnut bedroom set from the 1870s is displayed in the antique store. Cabinet at right is also walnut from the 1850s.

Treasure hunt

Customers can make big deal out of antiques

BY DIANE GALE
STAFF WRITER

If only the furniture, pictures, jewelry and other items at Hickory Hills Antiques in Farmington could talk.

Imagine the stories behind a desk that came from a southern plantation, a turn-of-the-century music box that still works, a Jacobean chair from the 17th Century, leaded glass and stained glass windows from the last century, and hand-carved bedroom sets hundreds of years old.

The 12,000-square-foot shop has almost anything imaginable from Victorian style note cards for a couple of dollars each to \$16,000 bedroom sets. Sales average \$100,000 monthly, according to owner Don Siwyer who also sublets space to other dealers. He expects the store will gross about \$1.6 million this year.

"My philosophy is two fast nickels beats a slow dime," Siwyer said. "We're getting a reputation of outfitting full bed and breakfasts. We are the largest in the Midwest for complete sets of restored antique sets."

Customers are greeted by a punch bowl, music, fresh brewed coffee and Don and Patti Siwyer's

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Don Siwyer

charismatic Maltese dog, Dexter. A newcomer needs at least an hour to browse.

While most of the collection is from 1910 and earlier there are some items from the 1940s.

"We get calls from people who say their grandmother passed away, 'Do you buy out estates?' and yes we do. The key is restoration and to know how to restore," said Siwyer, adding that he owns a restoration shop for the furniture in the store. The Siwyers celebrated Hickory Hill's first anniversary in March.

Their customers range in age and tastes, but the current trend in antique shoppers is young couples who are looking for practicality — furniture that they can use and that also has an investment as an added bonus. Antiques appreciate annually by 10 percent, Siwyer said.

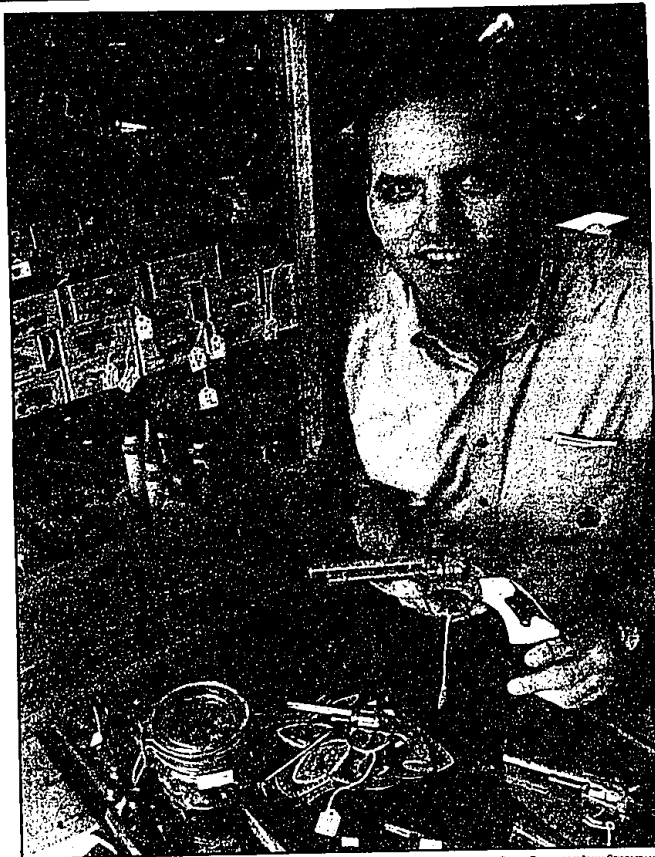
"It's really nice in here," said

Pam Lawrence of Farmington Hills who collects Depression-era glass. She found a piece in her pattern, but she already had it. If you're looking for a deal, there will be a lot of dealing going on Saturday and Sunday during "Deal with the Dealers." Dealers will be available to haggle with customers over prices.

Janet Pinkham was visiting from Holland, Mich., last weekend.

"We live on the other side of the state and every trip we make to visit our parents in Plymouth we come here, because they have such a good collection," Pinkham said.

If you don't find something that you like at the store on Grand River near Power, it's still worth the trip for the refreshments and to visit with Dexter, a star attraction who repeat customers often ask for, according to Patti Siwyer.



STAFF PHOTOS BY JOHN STORMEALD

Going great guns: Owner Don Siwyer shows off some old cap guns and some Matchbox cars and trucks in the original boxes.

Old is gold: Customer Jordan LaFreniere of West Bloomfield likes the looks of an old perfume bottle.



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