

Decorating with Consignment

Buy or sell nice-as-new items in and around Atlanta.



Savvy Snoot's Marty Mason and Patti Hodgson

Savvy Snoot

The Savvy Snoot Design Group assisted Jill Chopra in decorating her sunroom in Vinings. Owner Marty Mason and designer Patti Hodgson chose consigned furniture and accessories from their store, resulting in significant savings.

- 1 **Wicker sofa:** retail, \$2,800; consignment, \$1,400
- 2 **Modern coffee table:** retail, \$1,400; consignment, \$700
- 3 **Pair of lamps:** retail, \$2,400; consignment, \$1,150
- 4 **Metal flower sculptures:** retail, \$90 each; consignment, \$40 each

Buyers used to regard most consignment goods with a downward turn of the nose. Now consignment shops glow with highly desirable items in bright, showroom-quality settings. Don't consider them pieces with a past; rather, think recycled chic at a far lower cost than a newer counterpart. Sounds better already, doesn't it?

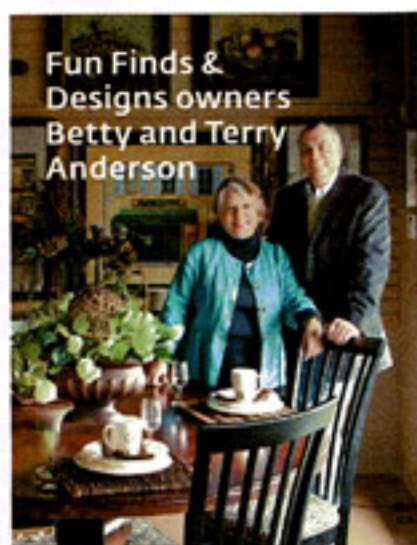
"Consignment is one of the few growth industries that's really taking off," says Betty Anderson, co-owner of Fun Finds & Designs, Inc. in Canton. "The economy is a huge factor: People are downsizing to smaller houses and could use the cash, plus builders are selling their model-home furniture—which is new—so there is a lot of inventory."

Marty Mason of Savvy Snoot (locations in Atlanta and Alpharetta) agrees that today's consignment shops are a big step up from dusty versions of the past. His stores are filled with a wide range of sophisticated bargains.

TIPS FOR BUYING CONSIGNMENT

- Get an overview. Because consignment stores can be packed with items, take a tour of the whole store before homing in on your favorites.
- Buy a lot, or buy a little. It's more common for most of us to purchase a key element or two to spruce up an existing room. If you decide to furnish whole rooms, arrive with an idea of your desired result (clippings from magazines, color swatches, etc.).
- Pick a major piece first. If shopping for an empty room, start by finding one inspirational item such as a great piece of art, unique chair, or fabulous table, advises Marty. "Once you have your inspiration, you can search for items that complement each other to achieve your final look," he says. Many consignment-store workers have design backgrounds, so enlist their help (you can even engage a decorator through the consignment shop to see your job through).
- Think beyond the obvious. Look at items with an open mind, says Marty. Many things





Fun Finds & Designs owners Betty and Terry Anderson

Fun Finds & Designs

Interior designer and consignment-store owner Betty Anderson worked with her client Donna Krueger to update this Roswell breakfast room on a budget. Everything is from a consignment store—including shops other than Betty's.

- ❶ **Gray rattan chairs with cushions:** estimated retail, \$385 each; consignment, \$160 each
- ❷ **Oak pedestal table:** retail, \$699 or more; consignment, \$314
- ❸ **Two-door cream-and-black credenza:** retail, \$499; consignment, \$269
- ❹ **Silver lamp:** retail, \$249; consignment, \$95

can be given a whole different look with a little creativity; you might consider painting or reupholstering furniture to match a current decor. A vintage console could have a new life as a bathroom vanity, for example, or a cool vase could be made into a lamp.

- Decide quickly. Because most items are one-of-a-kind, you do have to move, cautions Betty. "It's not like a furniture store where the same inventory will probably still be there in a few weeks," she adds. Tap into the thrill of the hunt, checking often—because you never know what will be there.

- Go ahead, haggle. Because most consignment stores are mom-and-pop businesses, it's fine to ask if the price can be negotiated. Some stores are even set up so that the item's cost is reduced the longer it remains in the store. In those cases, smart buyers may decide to risk waiting to get a better price.

- You will save money. "The rule of thumb is that you usually save as much as 50% off retail through a consignment store," says Marty.

TIPS FOR SELLING CONSIGNMENT

- Learn the process. Most consignment stores list submission steps on their Web sites. Once it's approved, you can take the object to the store yourself or arrange for a pickup service. (The latter usually comes with a fee.)
- Condition matters. No stains, missing legs, rips, or damage; no pieces from smokers.
- Know what's popular. Betty observes, for instance, that sofas or chairs in a solid fabric sell better than prints.
- What won't sell? Armoires and entertainment centers, Betty says, due to flat-screen TVs.
- If it doesn't sell? After a designated time, the shop will either donate your piece to a nonprofit or contact you to retrieve it.
- Understand pricing. The shop sets it and takes, on average, a 50% cut of the final sale. *

savvysnoot.com or 770/442-1315 (Alpharetta) and 404/355-1399 (Atlanta).

funfindsanddesigns.com or 770/704-0448 (Canton).

Total estimated retail: \$2,987
Donna's total cost: \$1,318

Savings

\$1,669