

Pirate Treasure for your Wardrobe and Home

Story by Rachel Peine/photos by Rich Peine

The history of the Keys is full of stories of pirate treasures, gold and jewels. We may have missed those days, but there's still treasure to be found here if you know where to look. If you're seeking something special in the way of vintage jewelry or clothing, original artwork or antiques, don't pass by the consignment shops whose colorful presence adds flavor up and down U.S. 1. You'll find your favorites, but let me share a few of mine.

Across from Pennekamp Park is Ashleigh's Attic, at mile marker 102.8. Maureen Covert has owned Ashleigh's since 2005, when the original owner decided to sell it, and Maureen decided she could satisfy her habit of consignment store shopping on a more regular basis. She's seen some unusual items come through the shop, including an antique surfboard, a sled (how useful in this climate!), and even a lithograph by a famous mural artist that she sold for \$750 on ebay. The owner had no idea of the worth of the lithograph but was very happy with the result. Now there's a

new twist on finding treasure! Right now, she has a gorgeous wooden bowl hand made in Europe stained in rings of color. It'll be a unique display item in the right setting.



Browse Ashleigh's Attics for new treasures.

A lot of Ashleigh's customers come in for costumes. Someone found a complete pirate outfit for a party - a white ruffled blouse, short black skirt, black boots, a wide belt, and even the big gold hoop earrings. Maureen says a lot of people just scout the store every few days just to see what's new. That's probably your best bet in finding that special item you can't live without. Ashleigh's Attic is open Monday - Friday 10 - 5 and Saturday 10 - 4.

The number is 451-2332. Farther south on the bay side, you'll see Keys Castaways at 99090 Overseas Highway, with the big anchor on the roof and the bright blue rope linking the pilings out front. Specializing in vintage clothing and jewelry, owner Wendy Hewitt found her new career after being laid off from MCI Worldcom, the largest bankruptcy in U.S. history. Wendy grew up in a town in New England known for its antique shops, and her mother was an expert on primitives and English antiques. She's had some unexpected items consigned by owners who were unaware of their items' value, such as piece of pottery from



Visit Wendy Hewitt at Keys Castaways

Mt. Pisgah that was made in a special firing only once a year.

Another unusual item was a fur coat owned by the wife of the producer of "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World", and worn to the movie's premiere. Wendy had photographs showing the owner and the coat at the premiere. If you can't get to Hollywood yourself, you can always take a little of it home with you by way of Key Largo.

Keys Castaways is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 - 5:00. Phone - 451-1116. Call for an appointment if you have items to consign, and Wendy will also sell items on ebay for you. Right now, she has a newly-arrived batch of vintage clothing and jewelry from the estate of a Miami Beach socialite, so stop in soon before it all disappears.

You never know what you'll find at these modern-day pirate treasure troves, so set aside some time to wander through the aisles. Take your time because there's lots of stuff hidden in the nooks and crannies. You can't possibly see everything in one visit, and new gems arrive daily.



Purple Isles Art Guild Annual Members Judge Show

The Art Show opens to the public, Saturday, February 24th, and will continue through Sunday, March 4th from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The popular Purple Isles Art Guild's 41st Annual Members Judged Exhibition can be viewed at the Key Largo Library Community Room, Mile Marker 101.4. Artists, Rocky Ferris, Georgiana Hosek, and Photographer, Pete Bacheler are this year's Judges.

Over 1,000 people have toured the exhibit in the past and the visitors are welcome to cast their votes for their favorite work of art. Awards are given at the opening reception, Friday evening before grand opening, Saturday. The different categories of art that will be displayed are: Watercolors, Oils, Acrylics, Sculpture, 3/D, Photography, other media, Digital art, and Student Art. The judges will award ribbons to several categories in addition to honorable mentions. The grand finale is "The Best of Show" which is the most admired award of them all.

The Purple Isles Art Guild has a long history in the Upper Keys and invites anyone who has an artistic urge to

join the group, enhance his or her talents and enjoys the camaraderie. The group meets once a month at the Library Community Room to share information and resources as well as arrange group attendance at art events in and outside of the Monroe County. Monthly plein air (paint out) events are hosted at multiple venues. Participants draw and paint on site, and pack a lunch or eat at a restaurant of choice. The organization has three workshops planned for 2007 and those participating are eager to learn new techniques and methods to improve their own style. This year our three class instructors are Karen Leffel-Massengill, Joyce Moon, and Dick Moody. We had a very successful pre-Christmas holiday sale and look forward to another member's fine art exhibit and sales at the Lion's Club in March.

The Purple Isles Art Guild has been a leading arts organization in the Upper Keys for over 41 years and its membership includes many of the most popular artists of the area. The event is sponsored in part by the Monroe County Tourist Development Council.



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