



THIS YEAR COOPERATIVE LIVING IS TAKING A ROAD TRIP ALONG THE LENGTH OF ROUTE 11 AS IT CROSSES VIRGINIA FROM NORTH TO SOUTH. EACH ISSUE, CORRESPONDENT DEBORAH HUSO WILL RELATE HER EXPERIENCES ALONG THE WAY.



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# Fabulous Finds

*Treasures old and new abound along Route 11 through Roanoke and Salem.*

On first glance, it's hard to say whether or not I've arrived at some really eclectic antique store or a junkyard. Before me is an industrial-looking brick building painted yellow, and all around it are piles of, well, stuff: dozens of rusted hot-water-heat radiators, gates, concrete statuary, railroad ties, even a British telephone booth. Oh, and I failed to mention "Herman, the German." More on him later ...

## ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE

If you've ever watched *Salvage Dawgs*, on the DIY Network, then you're already familiar with the architectural salvage operations of Mike Whiteside and Robert Kulp, owners of Black Dog Salvage just off Route 11 above the Roanoke River in southwest Roanoke. The building and grounds they call their professional home these days is headquarters for one of the country's best architectural salvage operations.



Black Dog Salvage is an intriguing collection of this, that and the other, such as a British telephone booth and a concrete gargoye.

"This building was an eyesore on Route 11," says Kulp, a former general contractor. "Some people may say it's still an eyesore, but at least it's an interesting one."

That it is.

A builder's daughter and amateur decorator, I am enthralled by the place and start envisioning cool headboards made of old iron garden gates and antique five-panel doors made new again. I am exactly the market Kulp and Whiteside sought to capture when they began their architectural salvage business 15 years ago.

It was a business that started by happenstance. Whiteside called Kulp for advice on building a garage, the two connected over their similar U.S. Navy backgrounds, and then decided to partner in getting a salvage contract to tear down an old house on Roanoke's Orchard Hill. "We figured out the hard way what we wanted from a salvage project," Kulp says of that first experience.



Kulp says being a feature show on the DIY Network has done incredible things for the business over the past three years. "On a typical day, we get people from all over the country," he says. "We're bringing back Route 11; Route 66 has nothing on us."

Kulp says he and Whiteside make a complementary partnership. "I'm a builder," Kulp explains. "I think a light fixture is just a light fixture. But Mike is different. He imagines it as something else." Hence you'll see tea cups and plates turned into garden art and tailgates turned into benches. That's all Whiteside's doing.

Black Dog's main market consists of people looking for materials to restore old houses or creative types wanting to do something unique with their decorating, like turn an Egyptian gate into a bar. "It's people who want a new house to look old or people looking for something exotic," Kulp says. "Interior designers really like this place."

And pretty much every piece in the whole place has a story, not surprisingly, which brings me back to Herman the German, an oversized piece of iron statuary standing near the entrance to Black Dog Salvage. "Herman came to us from China by way of Minnesota," Kulp explains in a story that seems a little dizzying. "This guy had 11 tractor trailer loads of iron, and he sold it to us, sending Herman along with it."

Kulp says it's amazing what sells, and after awhile you get a knack for what's worth tearing out of an old house and what's not. "We save window sashes for the old glass, sell old toilet tank lids because people break them a lot." If you wander around this place for hours, as I did, you'll see old stall doors from the stables at The Homestead and frames from sailing ships dug up from the Elizabeth River in Norfolk. And inside are even more oddities, many of them sold by vendors that Kulp and Whiteside approve. Need a blinking pharmacy sign? Yep, they've got that.

An eclectic variety of pieces awaits the adventurous browser who visits Black Dog Salvage. Robert Kulp (right) and Mike Whiteside

own the company, which is just off Route 11 above the Roanoke River in southwest Roanoke.



Home to one of the country's best architectural salvage operations, Black Dog Salvage was featured on the DIY Network. The business was started by happenstance after Mike Whiteside contacted contractor Robert Kulp on advice for building a garage, and the two decided to go into business together. "We figured out the hard way what we wanted from a salvage project," says Kulp. "This building (Black Dog Salvage) was an eyesore on Route 11," he adds. "Some people may say it's still an eyesore, but at least it's an interesting one."



She's International, on Salem's Main Street, is where Diane Speaks (lower right) practices her passion ... fashion ... from places far afield.



### COLLECTIONS OF ANOTHER KIND

Diane Speaks, owner of She's International on neighboring Salem's Main Street, is a collector of another kind. Her passion is fashion ... from places far afield. A flight attendant with U.S. Airways, Speaks has always loved to travel and shop in the various European locales she visits. After 9/11, her salary was cut by 40 percent, and she was scrambling for a way to make up the difference. A friend suggested she try to make money from her passion — which was shopping in Europe.

That was the beginning of She's International, which sells fashion, jewelry, purses, and other accessories that Speaks has picked out herself on shopping excursions in places ranging from Amsterdam to Brussels. She's even done some scavenging for luxuries in Israel. "They have fabulous jewelry there," she remarks. Speaks obtains a lot of her treasures from wholesale shopping districts and jewelry fairs. "I buy what I like," she says. "I feel like I have very good taste."

Speaks is also very particular about how she buys. She never purchases more than one of any item because she knows her customers, mostly local, come to her because they want clothes and accessories unlike anything anyone else has.

A former military brat, Speaks has lived in London as well as Japan and has a home in Philadelphia, the city from which she flies, as well as Salem, her hometown of 38 years and the

place where she raised her four children (two of them her deceased sister's kids). "Because we fly for free, the kids have been everywhere," Speaks says.

"One daughter has been to all seven continents."

Given how much she travels, however, Speaks can't run She's International alone. She hires students from Roanoke College to help run the shop and also hires someone to display and place her merchandise. "If I had to put the stuff out, it would look like Sanford and Son in here!" she jokes.

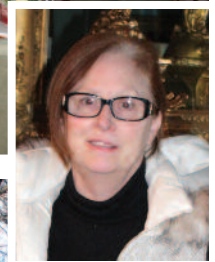
But despite her world travels, Speaks chooses to call Salem home. "I really like it here, and I'm used to the South now," she laughs.

### RAISING A BABY IN A BED AND BREAKFAST

Cindi Lou MacMackin has called Salem home for 18 years and has stayed here for many of the same reasons Speaks has. MacMackin owns and operates the 8,000-square-foot 1907 Inn At Burwell Place on Route 11 south of Salem's downtown. A native of nearby Montgomery County, she and her husband Mark lived in the D.C. area for many years before returning as close to home as they could get. "I had been in hotels and restaurants," MacMackin explains, "but when I became pregnant, I decided I wanted to get out of the city."

Her daughter, now fully grown, was thus essentially raised at the inn. And what an inn it is. Decadently adorned with antique walnut and cherry furnishing as well as sumptuous jacquard and velvet curtains, Burwell Place offers me an evening's respite in a three-room suite with four-poster bed, fireplace, sleeping porch, and whirlpool bath. In the morning, I find a sumptuous breakfast left outside my door.

Despite the romance of this inn, MacMackin says the majority of her guests are business travelers who are tired of hotel rooms. "Roanoke is the financial and business center of southwest Virginia," she points out, and her business guests like staying in a place that feels more like home. And home it is to the MacMackins, who host about 20 weddings a year here and also cater to couples looking for a quiet and romantic retreat. "It was tricky raising a young child in a bed and breakfast," MacMackin laughs. "I had couples coming here to get away from kids. There were many times I had to take my daughter out to the car to have her temper tantrums!" ■



Cindi Lou MacMackin (above right) owns and operates the 8,000-square-foot 1907 Inn At Burwell Place on Route 11 south of Salem's downtown.

## ● IF YOU GO ...

The **Salem Visitor' Center** (1001 Roanoke Blvd., 540-375-4044, [www.visitsalemva.com](http://www.visitsalemva.com)) is located in the lobby of the **Salem Civic Center** (540-375-3004, [www.salemciviccenter.com](http://www.salemciviccenter.com)) and is the city's counterpart to the **Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau** (101 Shenandoah Ave. NE, 540-342-6025, [www.visitroanokeva.com](http://www.visitroanokeva.com)) in Roanoke.

**Black Dog Salvage** (1902 13th St. SW, Roanoke, 540-343-6200, [www.blackdogsalvage.com](http://www.blackdogsalvage.com)), named in honor of the salvage dog Sally, is a must-stop for architectural salvage enthusiasts, antique hunters, interior decorators, and anyone else looking for something completely unique in the arena of home improvement and design. Across the street from Black Dog is access to a portion of the **Roanoke Valley Greenways** ([www.greenways.org](http://www.greenways.org)), a collection of walking, jogging, and biking trails scattered around both Roanoke and Salem.

If Black Dog doesn't give you your full fix on old stuff, downtown Salem has a number of antique stores worth browsing, including **Charlotte's Web Antique Mall** (27 West Main St., 540-375-7229, [www.charlotteswebantiquemall.com](http://www.charlotteswebantiquemall.com)). And make sure to hit **She's International** (112 E. Main Street, 540-375-2667,

[www.shesinternationalboutique.com](http://www.shesinternationalboutique.com)) for great finds from abroad. Pick up fresh-from-the-farm produce at the **Salem Farmers Market** (3 East Main St., 540-375-4098, [www.market.salemva.gov](http://www.market.salemva.gov)) Monday through Saturday from April to December.

For healthy eats, including a variety of unique salads, sandwiches, and soups (chilled mango, anyone?), stop in at the **Blue Apron Restaurant and Red Rooster Bar** (210 E. Main St., 540-375-0055, [www.blueapronredrooster.com](http://www.blueapronredrooster.com)). For heartier fare and some often gargantuan portions, try **Mac and Bob's** (316 E. Main St., 540-389-5999, [www.macandbobs.com](http://www.macandbobs.com)). The restaurant was established by two Roanoke College graduates, Jim "Mac" McEnerney and Bob Rotanz, and serves traditional American fare, including some giant calzones. The restaurant also has 40 craft beers on tap, but you might want to go get a beer right where it's made at **Parkway Brewing Co.** (739 Kessler Mill Road, 540-314-8234, [www.parkwaybrewing.com](http://www.parkwaybrewing.com)), which also has live music Thursday through Saturday evenings.

Settle in for the night at Salem's only bed and breakfast, **The Inn at Burwell Place** (601 West Main St., 540-387-0250, [www.burwellplace.com](http://www.burwellplace.com)), but book in advance, as the inn has only three rooms. ■



(From Top) Charlotte's Web Antique Mall is a good place to get your fix on old stuff; the Salem Farmers Market features fresh-from-the-farm produce Monday through Saturday from April to December; Parkway Brewing Company on Kessler Mill Road features craft beer and live music Thursday through Saturday evenings.