

SIMPLY GRACIOUS LIVING

Estate Sale & Thrift Shopping Checklist

A quick companion for spotting beautiful possibilities without bringing home someone else's clutter.

Estate sales, thrift stores, antique shops, and resale markets can be wonderful places to find character, quality, and pieces with a story. The secret is learning to look beyond the current finish while still knowing when to walk away.

Before You Go

- Make a short list of what you are actually looking for.
- Measure the spaces you hope to fill and save the measurements on your phone.
- Take photos of the rooms you are shopping for.
- Bring a small tape measure.
- Know your approximate budget before you start browsing.
- Leave enough room in your vehicle if you may purchase furniture or larger décor.

Pieces Worth a Second Look

Look For	Why It May Be Worth Considering
Solid wood furniture	Often refinishes beautifully and may offer better construction than inexpensive new pieces
Mirrors and substantial frames	Paint, wax, or Rub 'n Buff can completely change the finish
Lamps	A new shade or finish can give a quality lamp an entirely different look
Artwork and frames	Buy for the frame, the art, or both - they do not have to stay together
Brass, silver, pottery, and ceramics	Patina and age can add character that is difficult to reproduce
Baskets, trays, boxes, and small tables	Useful styling pieces that can move from room to room
Quality textiles	Look for linen, wool, needlepoint, or well-made vintage fabric in good condition

Inspect Before You Buy

- Check furniture for wobbling, cracks, missing pieces, water damage, and repairs.
- Open drawers and doors. Make sure they move properly and check the interior condition.
- Look underneath furniture for clues about construction and previous repairs.
- Check lamps and electrical items carefully; older wiring may need professional replacement.
- Inspect fabric for stains, odors, tears, excessive wear, or signs of pests.
- Check mirrors and glass for chips, cracks, clouding, or damage that cannot be easily corrected.
- Ask yourself whether the flaw is cosmetic - or structural.

Look Beyond the Current Finish

- Could paint give this piece a completely different personality?
- Would new hardware update it?
- Could the frame be refinished while keeping the artwork?
- Could a new lampshade transform the lamp?

- Could the piece serve a different purpose than it originally did?
- Is there enough quality underneath the dated finish to make the project worthwhile?

Before You Say Yes

- Do I know exactly where this will go?
- Is it the right scale for that space?
- Does it work with my decorating style - or can it realistically be adapted?
- Is the price still good after considering repairs, paint, fabric, hardware, or professional work?
- Am I buying it because I love its potential - or simply because it is inexpensive?
- If I leave without it, will I genuinely wish I had bought it tomorrow?

Simply Gracious Reminder

The goal is not to bring home more things. It is to recognize quality, character, and possibility when you find them. The best secondhand purchase is one that earns a meaningful place in your home.