



Laura Walker is the Montpelier boutique.

Our mission: To find those unique objets, furnishings and fashion that will turn *le tout* Atlanta green with envy. Our theater of operations is the popular Scott Antique Market, which takes place the second weekend of every month, Thursday through Sunday. Founded by Don Scott nearly 15 years ago, it has become the designer staple of the southeast and attracts treasure hunters from all over the country. Even shop owners from Los Angeles have been spotted post-red-eye, scouting the parking lot before dawn as the dealers unload their trucks.

Our guide: Laura Walker, designer and owner of Laura Walker, Ltd., in Peachtree Hills. This veteran of the antique market wars recalls that, in the market's early days, "It was all word of mouth, and you couldn't come on Thursdays without your designer card." Now "set-up day" is more relaxed and open to all. "I'll never forget my first great find, the one that made me a Scott's regular," she says: It was a collection of four 19th-century hand-colored hummingbird lithographs from the legendary bird man John Gould.

Great Scott

A Day at the Antique Market with Laura Walker

BY ELIZABETH SCHULTE ROTH. PHOTOGRAPHY LAUREN RUBINSTEIN.

Getting there: Heading south from downtown, take I-75 to I-285 to exit 55 and turn left to start at the Atlanta Expo Center's North building.

What's there: Approximately 2,000 booths loaded with everything from flea-market bric-a-brac to serious finds. Weed through scores of concrete birdbaths to find the birds of paradise.

Plan of attack: "Start here if you're looking for better-quality antiques," Walker says at the North building, handing over the \$3 entrance fee that covers the entire weekend. Come Friday morning around nine, it's quiet, and there's room to look around. If you're eager to join the collector frenzy, grab your flashlight and head to the parking lot on Thursday at 5 am.

Battle stations: "Always begin outside," Laura says, introducing us to John Lane of Vintage Studios. A show regular from North Carolina for more than 12 years, Lane has earned praise from *Architectural Digest* and *InStyle* for his custom ironwork. He uses antique pieces of iron and balustrades, re-crafting them into charming bases for tables, consoles, and even a designer sink. For her Montpelier abode, Walker topped off one of Lane's

Left face: Once inside (thank God for air conditioning), we go left. "When in doubt," Walker says, "head to the left corners," which are considered prime real estate. Look for Howard Dawson, who specializes in mostly European antiques.



Spiced chest from Riviera Antiques

Decorative iron table base from John Lane



From the booth of Ron Goetz, a wooden stool and Lucite lamp and chair

says. This month it's a 19th-century chest from Syria with exceptional mother-of-pearl and ebony inlaid into the façade. It would cost a fortune to reproduce today — a steal at \$7,500. "This place isn't just great for decorating your house," Walker says, "but decorating yourself as well." Our next stop is the fur lady. Among a sea of freshwater and Tahitian pearls, Patricia King Wright (look for the J-10 flag) keeps the best collection of vintage minks, stoles and fur coats. "Best to grab them in the summer" when competition is less fierce, Walker says, as we forage a delicious vintage mink jacket for \$495. Finally, Walker marches right to the wall, where a charming Shawn McGowan is counseling a pair of our city's socialites on "something chunky" to wear to an upcoming wedding. Our last stop proves to be a stellar success: quality beads, concho belts, stacks of this season's coral accessories and a turquoise Persian shell necklace we covet for summer soirées. McGowan has been coming to Scott from his NYC abode for six years.

His secret to success? "All the right girls know me," he says.

In our designer duffel: Tape measure, digital camera, plenty of cash (few dealers take plastic) and good bargaining skills. Don't forget a notebook for phone numbers. "If you get home and that fabulous ormolu-mounted bombé chest is still on your mind," Walker says, "you can call and have it put on hold. The gentleman's agreement still works here." And comfortable shoes, such as Laura's Coclico brown suede wedges from Sabot.

For more information, log onto scottantiquemarket.com or call 740.569.2800.

architectural artifacts with limestone for a unique powder room. Across the parking lot, we meet James Herron from West Palm Beach. Because his set-up time inside isn't until after 10 am, he doesn't miss the early buyers who start arriving at 5 am. Among his sprawling empire, we spot a Florentine outdoor chaise from the 1930s with its original canopy frame, a pair of Lucite bar stools and scores of garden accessories. "Anything water-related sells," Herron says. "Especially birdbaths and fountains with old-world charm."

This month, he has two 19th-century English iron chairs engraved with exquisite swan details. "I was thinking of the Swan House," he explains. Skip the booths of Americana (what Walker calls "the brown furniture"), unless that's your thing. Look up for the C-8 flag hanging from the ceiling to find Tony Crespo's space in the middle, where we ogle a stone-topped lounge table from the turn of the 20th century that he loaded down with shells and hand-carved wooden candlesticks. "If you have the run-of-the-mill stuff, people just walk

on by," he says. "Southerners have a great eye. They're very intuitive and know exactly what they want." **Pit stop:** "Time for humans!" Walker says, so we head for the flashing "Food" sign. Clique-ish as a high-school cafeteria — designers at one table, Buckhead Bettys at another — this food stand is known for its five-star Greek cuisine. After a spinach and feta tart, we go contemporary at Ron Goetz' space by the south door. Plastic chairs from the '50s, vintage Lucite lamps, yellow

snakeskin stools, the obligatory starburst mirror and colorful lacquer cubes perfect for a side table or stacked as a bookshelf. **Southern flank:** Walker calls the South building "more vintage and less expensive," because it has fewer fancy dealers. A quick drive across the highway (skip the shuttle — always late and crowded!) and it's back and to the left again to Riviera Antiques, where we find the delightful Battagliani family from France. "I always try to bring at least one very special piece to Scott," Marie Battagliani



A pair of Lucite bar stools from James Herron