

#Good Vibes

## Guest Blog: Navigating Estate Sales

Dreamsister

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5 min read



*Avid thrifter - and OG Visva community member - dreamsister is our guest blogger today! She'll give us some insight on how to navigate estate sales, and share some of her finds.*

Garage sales, and secondhand shopping in general, were a big thing in my family when I was a kid. I remember my mom would scan the daily newspaper for garage sale ads and make a plan to

hit up a few that following Saturday. My mom never told me what she was hunting for, and as a kid, I'm pretty sure I didn't care. But I loved the thrill of searching for undiscovered treasure, especially toys!

When I moved away for college, my love for secondhand shopping grew to include thrift shops and record stores. I spent countless hours sifting through the used CD and vinyl bins looking for albums I didn't have. If I blew my entire budget, it was a success. I might have to live on ramen for the next week, but hey, I scored that bootleg I wanted.

Having done the secondhand shopping thing for more than half my life, it's become almost second nature. Read on for a few things I learned along the way, and a quick walk through a recent estate sale I attended. First, let's look at the difference between an estate sale and a garage/yard sale.

## **Estate Sale vs. Garage/Yard Sale**

We're all pretty familiar with the garage sale, or yard sale. It's usually a one-day sale in the front yard or driveway of a family home. Typically, you will not find much information on the items being sold, so it can be hit or miss. Some great things to look for are dish sets, baby items, toys, and clothing.

At an estate sale, most or all of the contents of the home is on sale. The seller will usually hire an outside company to set up and manage the sale, which is typically held inside the home. Estate sales are great for finding furniture, electronics, anything kitchen related, and large outdoor items.



Classic vinyl!

## Estate Sale Jaunt

Things have come full circle now that I'm an adult, and I'm back to secondhand shopping with my mom. The biggest difference is I now have my own money and can buy whatever I like. 😊 She is subscribed to a few estate sale mailing lists, so we're always on the lookout for the next big sale.

**Pro Tip:** Check out [EstateSales.net](https://www.estatesales.net) and [EstateSales.org](https://www.estatesales.org) to find sales in your area, as well as auctions and online sales. These sites usually have photos of the items for sale, and you can sign up for email notifications.

We recently went to a “downsizing” estate sale. The website indicated that one of the homeowners had to be placed in assisted living, and his spouse wanted to move out of their gigantic house and into an apartment. As I browsed through the photos of items, I ran through my mental list of things I always look for:

- Vinyl
- Art
- Denim
- Patio decor
- Home decor

They also listed gaming equipment, so my kiddo, an avid Mario Bros fan, was excited to join us.

**Pro Tip:** Make a plan and be prepared. Almost every estate sale now accepts credit cards, and even Venmo, but always bring extra cash. Be sure to bring a mask, as most sales still have a strict mask policy. If you are planning to buy furniture, art, or rugs, bring a measuring tape and leave some blankets or drop cloths in your vehicle.



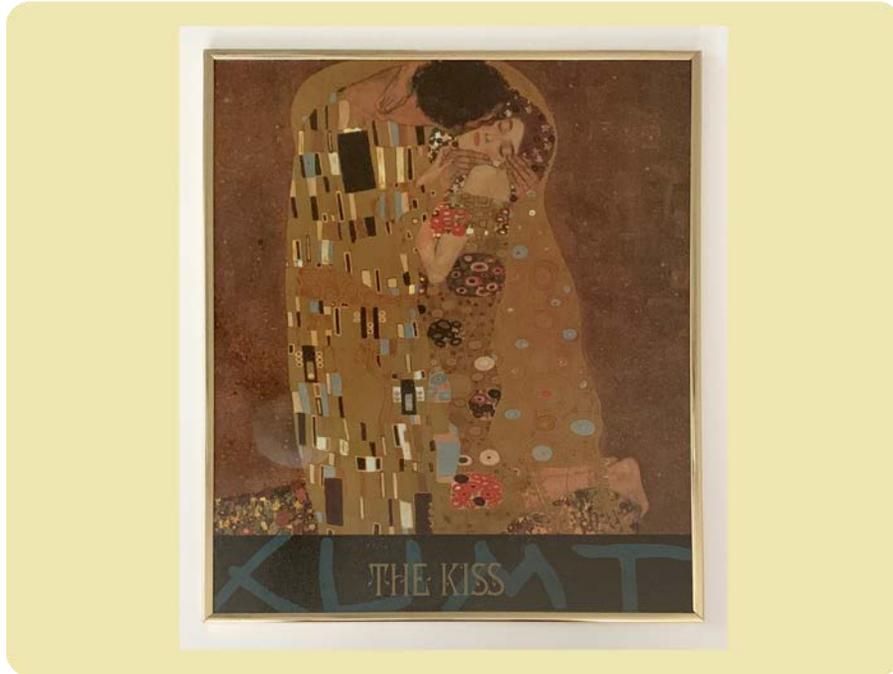
Edgar Degas lithograph and certificate of authenticity

We arrived 30 minutes before the sale was set to begin, and there was already a line of around 25 people. Experienced shoppers, as well as dealers or resellers, will usually be at the front of the line. We even recognized the guy standing in line in front of us! He was at another sale we attended a few weeks ago.

These folks have already decided what they want, know where to find them, and will head straight for those items. I was interested in a pair of hanging chairs for the patio, which I had seen on the website, but that guy beat me to them.

**Pro Tip:** If you know what you want, get there early! Park away from the house, so you can easily exit the street. The area in front

of the home tends to get very crowded. Also, be prepared to stand in line outside, in any type of weather.



Gustav Klimt art print

The estate sale company was very organized, and a staff member came outside before the sale started to let us know what to expect and where to find certain items.

Once we made it inside, I saw that the guy had snagged the hanging chairs, so I didn't even go into the patio area. My son and I went into the media room to look for music, games, and books. My mom headed to the bedroom closets to look for clothes.

I found a few classic vinyl records, but the video games they had weren't compatible with our system. However, my son scored an awesome, brand new Super Mario chess set for only \$3! I didn't see that set, because it was under a table, stacked with other games.

Don't forget to look under tables, on the floor, and inside closets. The estate sale companies are working with limited space, so they will display items in every available area in the house. I've also

found that they will space out certain items. For example, you may find jewelry in several different bedrooms, not just in one place.

**Pro Tip:** People tend to look at the bigger items first. If you have your eye on furniture, rugs, or large electronics, go there first. Then swing back around through each room to look for small items like books, music, and jewelry.



Super Mario chess set

I was walking around the living room looking for a Klimt art print I had seen on the website, when I stumbled upon a beautiful Degas lithograph. It was a little pricey, but it included a certificate of authenticity. I walked around with it, debating where or not to spend the money. While I did that, I found the Klimt print I wanted on a random table in a small room.

After more internal debate, I decided to buy them both!

**Pro Tip:** If you really like something, just buy it. I've been haunted by items I walked away from and later regretted not buying.

In the end, my mom, my son, and I each got a little something we really wanted. The sale lasts for three days, so I'm keeping my eye on the website to see what's still available...and discounted. By the

third day, most estate sales will heavily discount the remaining items just to get rid of them.

That's all I got. Now get out there and do some shopping!

Got any tips or advice? Join me on [Thrift Finds](#) and share the thrifting love!



Author

**Dreamsister**

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