

THE DOOR STORE

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RENOVATIONS

Trolling for treasure in salvage stores

A walk through these hardware graveyards is a must for any renovator



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Scouring architectural salvage stores for one-of-a-kind finds and all things quirky is the most fun you can have legally on a cold, rainy November afternoon.

Well, for me it's a hoot any time, but that's me.

Last weekend, my husband, John, and I visited one such place, called Builders Bazaar. We heard about them through our general contractor, Frank Cohn of Cohn Construction (they don't advertise).

On Burnhamthorpe Road, just west of Trafalgar Road in Oakville, they're nestled in a tranquil rural pocket that has somehow escaped the suburbanization that is rapidly gobbling up farmland all around them.

We were looking for a pair of French doors to install in our entrance hall leading to the living room, and wanted something old (like our house) with bevelled glass and lots of character.

Did we find character? Not to mention doors — interior and exterior, with and without leaded glass and vintage hardware, some even with the quintessentially quirky Coke-bottle glass in a lovely golden hue.

They have every conceivable type, size and style of door and window, as well as everything else building-related you could imag-

ine, including the kitchen sink.

Stores like these are treasure troves and should be on the go-see list for anyone contemplating a renovation. Like many architectural salvage stores, the Builders Bazaar has various kitchen and bathroom cabinets; sections of granite, marble and laminate countertops; and all nature of sinks and hardware.

There is floor tile, wall tile, and pile upon pile of commercial-grade carpet tile that looks new and would be a perfect hard-wearing floor finish in a basement, billiards room or start-up office space.

If you're replacing a staircase or building a porch, they have pickets and newel posts galore for a fraction of the cost of new. They also have the sweetest antique claw-foot bathtub complete with brass taps. I wished I had had another bathroom to renovate! With a constantly changing inventory, there are great finds whether you're installing a rental unit in your house, renovating your home or fixing up a cottage.

Another emporium of salvaged architectural products we recently visited — this time looking for some door hardware for the upstairs bathroom — was The Door Store at 1260 Castlefield Ave. in Toronto.

It never fails to send me into raptures. It's like entering another world, a sepia-toned milieu where you half expect to be offered a tot of sherry by a Victorian houseman.

The Door Store specializes in salvaged doors, windows, fireplace mantels and ironwork. They also carry an impressive range of antique and reproduction hardware and lighting.

We found an authentic bronze art deco doorknob with back plate, and the store even "antiqued" the



A selection of cast-off hardware at Toronto's Door Store, left. It and other salvage stores around the city can provide anything from tiles to windows and doors, offering both bargains and the opportunity to bring back to life some unique bits of architectural history.

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screws needed to attach the hardware so that the finish would match. That's the kind of attention to detail that brings customers back!

The bathroom door that this lovely hardware graces is from yet another architectural salvage shop, Home Again, at 89 Research Rd. in Toronto, is another of Frank's favourite sources.

We'd asked him to find us a 24-inch-wide, glazed French door for this bathroom. He found us a matched pair at Home Again and,

at \$300 for both, they were a bargain we couldn't pass up.

You may be wondering why we wanted glass in a bathroom door. We're actually not exhibitionists. The bathroom's large garden window is the main source of natural light for the upstairs hall and stairs. It faces south and, during certain times of day, even this time of year, floods the hall with the most gorgeous light, which a solid door would have blocked.

A central rectangle in each pane of glass in the door has a leafy pat-

tern that is translucent, not transparent, so I really have to worry about only the one inch or so of clear glass around the patterned bits — the bits my voyeur dog has discovered she can peer through during the most inopportune moments.

Modern technology to the rescue: a coating or two of spray-on Frosted Glass Finish by Krylon (available at most major hardware stores) should provide a semblance of privacy.

There may be a hint of a silhou-

ette at night but it'll be just one more quirk to add to our growing inventory, thanks to our character-filled finds at salvage shops. And that's just how we like it.

Elizabeth Rand-Watkinson is principal of Terrier Group, which does interior designs. *Reno Adventures* appears weekly, covering all aspects of home renovation.

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