

Biking the Canals

A GARDEN MASTERPIECE

Autumn Adventures

# RIVER TOWNS

ISSUE 14 | FALL 2022

**PETER TUCCI'S**

long and  
wacky (*his word*)  
obsession with

**JOSEPH  
BONAPARTE—**

brother of Napoleon,  
king of Spain,  
Jersey Guy.





# departments



PHOTO BY CAROLINA RIVERA

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Under the pen name Philip William Stover, Philip Kain has based two of his gay romance novels in New Hope.  
*By Karen Sangillo*

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*By Felicia Zegler*

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# THE GREAT TREASURE HUNT

From pottery to pewter, gemstones to glassware, and eclectic to ephemeral, Golden Nugget Antique Flea Market offers a shopping adventure with a whole lot of quirky.

By JOE FERRY | Photos by LAURA PEDRICK



*Betty Vega of Hidden Treasures sells unusual and sometimes rare items from a booth inside the Golden Nugget.*





Presidential masks, for sale by Jack Gilbert, of Ewing, are among the unconventional items available.

“Weird stuff. Cool junk.” Those words are scrawled on a makeshift sign outside the two-story building that houses 50 indoor shops at the iconic Golden Nugget Antique Flea Market just outside of Lambertville. Add eclectic, ephemeral, hard-to-find, and just plain special, and you have a pretty good description of what you might discover for sale by hundreds of vendors on the sprawling fifteen-acre property along Route 29 in Hopewell Township.

Within minutes of browsing the 400 outdoor tables, you’ll come across everything from a 1950s-era copper elephant’s head made in the Brutalized Art style (\$2,000) to a jar of marbles (\$8) and a spool of cotton thread (\$1). A couple of rows over, you can pick up a “barely used” Thrush muffler (\$10) or a 1950s red majorette outfit, complete with skirt. For music lovers, there’s a stack of 45 rpm records for \$20, obscure CDs from the 1980s and

’90s, numerous eight-track tapes (like new!), and a prominently displayed vinyl album featuring the late Olivia Newton-John and John Travolta.

“We like to pride ourselves on not having regular flea market stuff,” says Mitch Freedman, the market’s manager for the last seven years. “Our draw is the odd, the unusual, the special.”

For the past fifty years, vendors at the Golden Nugget—named in honor of Lambertville native son James W. Marshall, who set off the Gold Rush in 1845 when he discovered the precious metal in the American River while working in a northern California sawmill—have been selling rare books and artwork, architectural salvage pieces and vintage cookware, rocks, old videos, and arcade games.

The Golden Nugget’s vendors—some will haggle over prices—are almost as colorful as the items they sell. Pat Capozzoli, 81, of Holland, in Bucks County, a vendor since 1986, is among the



Matt Faircloth and his wife, Liz, of New Hope, decided to teach their children a lesson in entrepreneurship by renting a table and selling their toys. Matt assists his son Zachary, 8, on the art of negotiating.





Mid-morning treasure seekers peruse Pat Capozzoli's tables at the Golden Nugget.

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thirty or so sellers set up under the pavilion most Saturdays and Sundays. Capozzoli's space features dozens of boxes of vintage glass door knobs, hinges, typewriter buttons, and skeleton keys. His business card says it all: "Buying junk, Selling fine antiques."

Across the way, Mike McClintock, 72, who owned the Artful Eye Gallery in Lambertville for thirty-nine years, displays his artwork, pottery, pewter, and bronze items, old photos, and rare publications. In McClintock's view, the Golden Nugget is unique among flea markets. "It's one of the better ones still left in this country," he says.

Then there's Professor Ouch

(he wouldn't give his real name), a tattoo artist-turned-vendor who specializes in politically incorrect buttons, bizarre masks, and what he calls "eclectic, ephemeral" paper products.

Inside, you'll find vendors such as Michelle Caney, who sells vintage film cameras, out-of-print, first-run, and signed photography books, and fine writing instruments and ink bottles at her store, Bibliotheque. She also hosts a monthly showcase for local photographers.

If you're lucky, you might meet Dina DeFinis and Helen Bolmer enjoying an 11 a.m. sambuca together. DeFinis owns five shops that sell antique clothing,

dolls, glassware, artwork, and furniture. In her shop, "Helen's Treasures," Bolmer sells costume jewelry, Nippon, German, and Austrian porcelain, and various fine glassware. Outgoing and knowledgeable, they'll make you feel like you're at a party.

If you're really lucky, you might spot a customer on your way out loading his car with a pair of table lamps, each adorned with a stuffed squirrel. Weird and cool. Golden nuggets, indeed. ☎

*Joe Ferry took a road trip to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in the Summer issue of River Towns.*

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**Oct 12-13: Walk-Thru Viewing | Oct 14-16: Drive-Thru Viewing**

**WOOLSEY PARK IN HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP**

Barbara DiLorenzo + Jonathan Fisk

Sarah Bernotas

**arts COUNCIL**