



One of my favorite hidden gems...





I promised in the January Magazine to tell you about some of my favorite places to find just the right finishing touches for decorating. I have several little go-to places where I find just that special something. I love to go to these mom and pop shops because I can decorate with these one of a kind items that no one else can get, because there's only one.

For one of my favorites, you'll have to grab some girlfriends or your favorite person and make it a day trip because you will be headed to Monroe City. Now, I had never heard of Monroe City either, but it's a little gem. It is about 15 minutes past the dam at Mark Twain Lake up in northern Missouri. From Jefferson City it will be a calming and scenic 1 hour and 45 minutes. Just past the railroad tracks in the downtown area is a little corner shop called Applebee Tree. It is listed as a florist shop, but it is oh so much more.



I first noticed the floral arrangements, which are handmade right there, but then kept finding little treasures every time I went in. It would be a rarity for me to go there and not buy something, usually many somethings. I took pictures of some of what I found the last trip and where I have used other items I found to decorate.

I know I said to grab some girlfriends and make this a day trip - that sounds so lovely - but I need time to think when I shop, so I take myself! Everything I buy has a place it is going or I do not purchase it. I have found the littlest of touches, like a 3 inch glass bottle, a custom soap...it just makes all the difference.

If you see something you love or something that brings back a memory, use those pieces intermixed with the new. The owner makes flower arrangements using old wooden boxes, ceramic antique mixing bowls, wooden tool holders, old wire egg baskets... Those are the items I love my flower arrangements in. I think the last one I purchased was in an old brass spittoon (if you don't know what this is... look it up, it's a thing!) And yes, it was fully cleaned out!

Now, I am not an antique collector by any means. I blend the old in with the very popular new and make conversation pieces to look at that aren't going to be found anywhere else. Such simple ideas like a back deck I decorated and put a rug with a table, pillows, potted bushes for greenery and between 2 pots an antique metal watering can. It just looks fantastic with the colors.





I visited Applebee Tree one time a few years ago and found these round, metal gas cans that I kept walking around because on one the red was almost all the way rubbed off and it was a metal look with a hint of the old red emblem - but the other was a vibrant dark blue with oil still on it but now dried to give it its own matte look. I didn't know exactly how to arrange them, but I knew they needed to be in a farmhouse I VRBO.

I took Gavin around Christmas last year and we found something else that just pulls you in - a train that runs right by the store. When I say it runs right by the store - I mean right-by-the-store - we thought it might come INTO the store! It lasts about 5-10 minutes and is an experience in itself. If you're there at 1:00 - you won't miss the train!



The last time we were at Applebee Tree, Payten found a glass jar to purchase. It turned out to be so much fun when she opened it because it was full of little antique treasures...buttons, a whistle... and a juice harp (Google that one!) Payten was so impressed when I knew what it was because my brother had one growing up.

The same owner owns the whole block. Where there is also BK Chicken - order their spicy fried chicken (it's not really spicy), a clothing store and a neighborhood bar. I didn't realize the same person owned the whole block until I went into each place and noticed the decor...then it was obvious!





His newest venture is the event space running along the back of this whole block. It used to be a large commercial garage with soaring ceilings that peeked at a row of functioning windows, a loft and huge doors that open at either end of the block. It's going to be something!

Oh, and if you look to the next block just across the railroad tracks, you'll see one of the only Ben Franklin stores left (that is like a Hobby Lobby) and it is a real treat! This place is packed floor to ceiling with treasures everywhere!



I'm not going to give you all the pictures of my special places because they are just that - PLACES - destinations that need to be felt. So do not ruin it and Google my little hideaways - just GO! Be present! Live a little!

