

A 'homey' setting for antiquing

Antiques in an Apple Orchard could turn into tradition despite rainy first outing

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Editor

Turn-of-the-century wooden furniture and Scandinavian textiles might not be what you'd expect to see in an orchard, but that's what would have been surrounding you if you made a trip out to Maiden Rock Winery and Cidery last weekend.

Antiques in an Apple Orchard featured 27 dealers from six states packed into and around the Stockholm, Wis., area winery's barn-shaped storage facility, laboratory and gift shop, and a large tent.

Most sellers brought only small portions of their inventories that fit into the show's pre-World War II Americana or Scandinavian themes, said promoter Gwen LeFevre.

More than 400 antiquers browsed the show's selection, which included handmade wall hangings, wooden and ceramic dishes, and well-worn tools.

The turnout was lower than LeFevre would have liked or expected, but that was beyond anyone's control.

"We were fighting the weather and the wind," she said.

Traffic was heavy during the early-buying event Friday, when the skies were clear and during regular hours Saturday when rain only briefly — although heavily — interrupted the day.

Skies were dark and foreboding around mid-day Sunday as shoppers trickled in.

One advantage of the inclement weather was that anyone who made it out were almost surely committed buyers, LeFevre said.

Among those serious shoppers



Linda Whalen, left, listens as antique dealer Marcia Hansen, of Luck, Wis. explains an 18th century candle-making implement Sunday at Antiques in an Apple Orchard at Maiden Rock Winery and Cidery outside Stockholm, Wis. Twenty-seven antique dealers from six states set up in the winery's multi-purpose building, on the building's veranda and in a tent outside the building for the first of what organizers hope will be a yearly event.

were a rare couple of casual wanderers, Linda and Rick Whalen, of South St. Paul, Minn.

The weather wasn't going to deter the Whalens.

They committed to the trip and stuck with it.

"You don't get to pick what kind of day you have," Linda Whalen said.

The Whalens meandered through booths densely packed with items that were, in some cases, generations older than anyone at the show.

One of the sturdy fixtures that caught Linda Whalen's eye was a mid-1800s baking station whose fold-out kneading and rolling platform could still take any

pressure a cook or baker could put on it.

The orchard provided a perfect setting for antiquing, much better than the usual school gymnasium or civic center, LeFevre said.

"There are 5,000 apple trees and all of them are in bloom," she said. "And the antiques fit in beautifully."

Despite being under a tent in the middle of a rainstorm, dealer Marcia Hansen, of Luck, Wis., was happy to have grass and hay under her feet.

"It makes it all a little more folksy," she said. "It's a really nice atmosphere, people just enjoying themselves."

And when the rain stopped, the soundtrack just couldn't be beat.

"It's kind of fun out here to hear the birds singing," Hansen said.

River Falls-area antique dealer Suzanne Kramer preferred to keep her fragile items inside the main building, away from the elements.

Kramer, who has been around antiques for about 60 of her 62 years, brought many Norwegian items, and threw in a scattering of Finnish and Swedish for variety.

Some of Kramer's favorite parts of her collection were those that came from Sweden — appropriate given the nearby town that sprang from a Swedish settlement.

The setting isn't simply charming, Kramer said. She expects it will bring new visitors to the area.

LeFevre said she hopes to continue the show next year to offer antiquers a unique experience.

"When you think of antiques, you think of something cozy and homey and warm and wonderful," she said. "And this is it."