



# TOPANGA VINTAGE MARKET

**TREASURE SEEKERS EXIT THE TOPANGA VINTAGE MARKET, SPECIAL FINDS IN HAND. THE FLEA MARKET, FOUNDED IN 2012, TAKES PLACE THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT PIERCE COLLEGE IN WOODLAND HILLS.**

*Photo courtesy of TopangaVintageMarket.com*

BY CLAIRE FORDHAM

The chances of finding a hidden treasure at a flea market are slim.

Paying five bucks for a trinket or painting that makes your fortune is a lovely fantasy, but it's just that. There are, however, bargains and fun to be had when searching through the stalls at Topanga Vintage Market.

Founded five years ago by two local moms, Lori Rotblatt and Patrice Curedale, Topanga Vintage Market (TVM) is the only flea market of its kind in the San Fernando Valley, and has more than 180 stalls to visit.

Curedale says everyone haggles at the flea; the key is not to be rude. "Be polite," she said. "Smile. Nod. Asking the price is nicer than opening with 'I'll give you...,' and cash is king."

That's the etiquette, but some expertise also goes a long way. "Know your stuff," said Curedale. "Then you will know if the price is good or way off. Don't disparage the goods, but feel free to point out if the condition is less than perfect. Buying more than one item helps, so look around before starting to negotiate and don't walk away once you've haggled and a seller meets your price. Prices may well go down later, especially on large items, so try an end-of-day offer—but not for less than you originally offered. Become a repeat customer and your favorite seller will treat you especially well, and remember to say, 'thank you,' whether you made a successful deal or not. If haggling makes you uncomfortable, just pay full price for your heart's desire and make a vendor's day," said Curedale. Most importantly: "Don't forget to have fun."

At June's Topanga Vintage Market, I decided to put Curedale's approach into action. There was a perfect purse for \$25. I offered \$20 and the vendor readily accepted. I kicked myself for not opening with \$15. Furious at myself for my horrendous haggling, I spotted a dark blue mason jar I really wanted, going for \$5. I picked it up and studied it carefully, making sure the vendor saw I was interested and then put it back on the table. I had a cunning plan to walk around a bit, come back and casually

offer \$3. When I finally found the stall again, having retraced my steps 20 times and close to death from the heat, the jar had gone. It's a fine line between haggling and penny-pinching.

Flea markets date back to the 1800s and have since become a worldwide, multi-billion-dollar industry.

"As passionate art and vintage enthusiasts, we knew we found our calling with Topanga Vintage Market," said Curedale. "We work really hard to ensure there is quality merchandise at every market, something suited for every type of shopper. We've placed emphasis on staying connected with all our sellers and shoppers in this digital age, which helps build our brand loyalty. We are beyond thrilled to be celebrating five years and look forward to continuing to make it even better in the years to come. When I'm not busy raising my two boys, I'm thinking of ways to make TVM even more junkalicious."

Topanga Vintage Market continues to thrive, with some 3,000 shoppers attending every show that features a fine selection of vintage, antiques, collectibles and up-cycled art.

"When we launched in 2012, we knew we were entering a competitive industry, with other great LA markets having been around for decades," said Rotblatt. "But after our very first show, we knew it was going to be an event unlike anything else. We've put a modern spin on an older flea market concept in a highly populated neighborhood. We blend humor and fun with our vendor family and loyal shopper base." ■

*Topanga Vintage Market is held the fourth Sunday of every month, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Pierce College, Victory Boulevard at Mason Avenue, Woodland Hills, CA 91306. They might close earlier if it's excessively hot. There are more than 180 vintage and antiques vendors and artisans—plus food trucks. Admission is \$3. Free for children 12 and under. No pets. Parking is free. For more information: [topangavintagemarket.com](http://topangavintagemarket.com); or (310) 422-1844.*