

A Day Trip to Brookwood and Hemi Hideout- October 2023

On a sunny October morning, members of the LF garden club hoped on a waiting bus to take us on our planned adventure.

About an hour later we arrived safely at the Brookwood Community for shopping and lunch at their café.

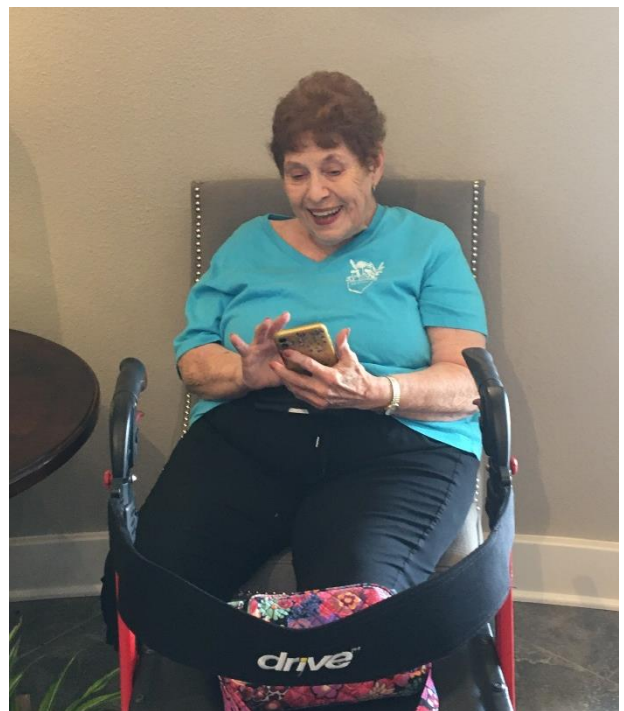


The gift shop offered holiday decoration and many gift item ideas for early Christmas shopping.

The greenhouse was emptied for the poinsettias to arrive but many plants and flowers were offered for sale outside and around the patio.



While most of us explored the shop and the contemplated which plants to buy, Sheila and Gloria, tired from shopping, waited in the lobby for the cafe to open.









After lunch and last-minute shopping at the garden center, we climbed on the bus to continue our trip to Hemi Hideout, just a few miles away.

Hemi Hideout

is the unique project of John Hovas, a retired machinist and collector of old cars and other nostalgic memorabilia. He finds these items at auctions and restores them with the help of a

few enthusiastic and skilled friends. As his collection grew, he had an impressively large barn built entirely out of Douglas Fir wood. Not open to the public, the collection can be admired by appointment only.







Hundreds of Neon Signs were lit up and gave the show room a colorful, almost magical glow. Although the lights only come on when a tour group is scheduled, the monthly electricity bill amounts to ~\$5,000.00.





We were fortunate that Mr. Hovas, (picture above) the owner, was in the show room. He willingly answered our questions and shared many interesting and humorous stories about the items he has collected and the history surrounding them.



A large tree trunk floating down the Arkansas river after a flood. It was rescued, artfully cut and polished and now serves as a unique table.



The many barstools in the room are crafted out of metal chains, nails, screws and old metal tool. No two are alike.



This is the largest Neon sign in the exhibition. The arms of the cowboy move up as he shoots his gun. A flash from the gun is illuminated every time he shoots it.



The dome of the barn is several stories high with windows all around. Huge Neon signs are suspended from every wall but as Mr. Hovas stated, there is always room for more.

Antique gas pumps advertised the gallon of gas for 10 cents.

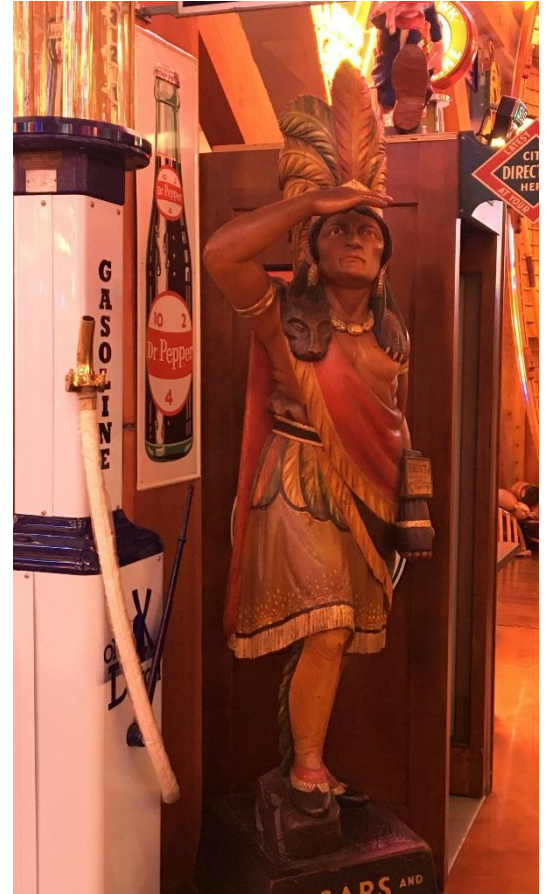


This toy Cadillac is an exact replica of the model produced in the 1920'. The details are impressive.

Mr. Hovas acquired it in auction for \$10,000, and restored it to its former new condition.



A comfortable lounge area, invites guest to relax for a while. The stuffed Polar bear in the corner is a rarity Mr. Hovas could not pass up.



Statues of Indians in full Indian insignias could be seen outside a shop advertising Tobacco product. This one is unusual as he is “in motion” as compared to the usual stiffly standing statues.





This large, heavy table top is a special and impressive item in the collection. It is cut from the base of a petrified Sequoia tree, which was believed to be ~265 million years old.



Not quite as old but long forgotten, is this antique Telephone booth.



Some of us probably danced to the latest hits coming from a Juke box like this one.





This Texaco symbol is the oldest electrical sign, predating neon signs.



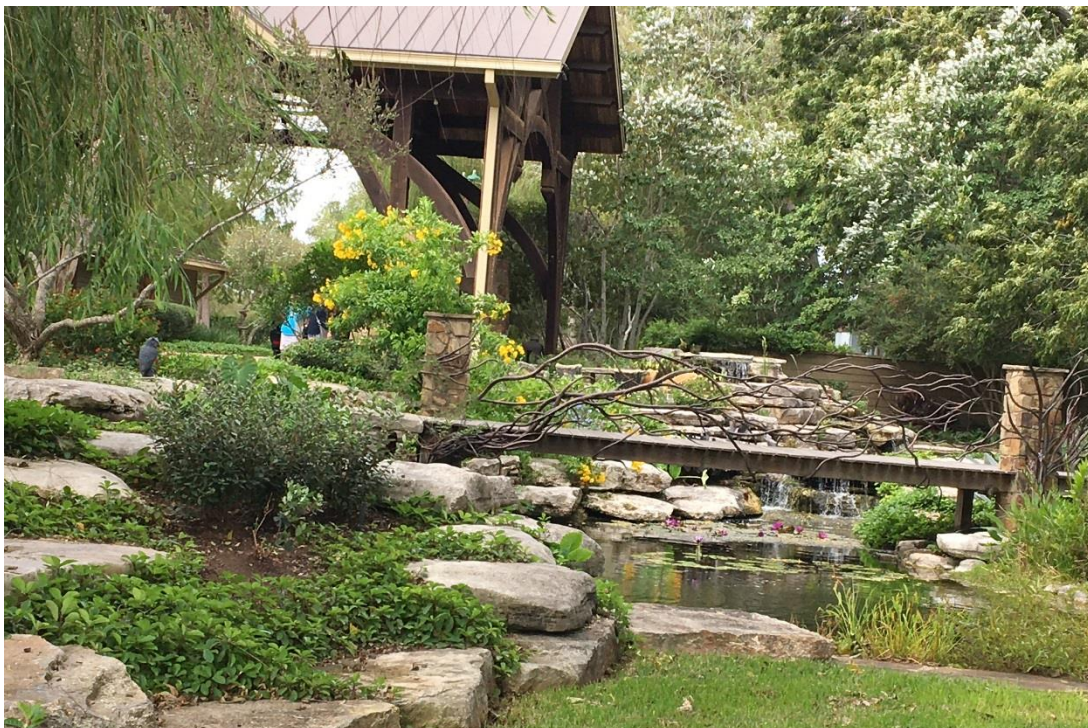
Many companies' logos seen here are no longer in business or have changed names during mergers.

Others are still recognized today.





The sheer number of items on display is almost overwhelming. In showing and describing some, I did not do the exhibition justice. You just have to go and see for yourself, spend time and hear the stories associated with each piece. Not open to the public, tours are only offered by appointment and must be in a group of 4 or more. So, get your friends together and plan a trip to see this amazing place.



Not interested in old stuff or antique cars?? The grounds alone are a gardener's delight and well worth the trip to **Hemi Hideout**.