

Tony's collection is top drawer

Former second-hand dealer **TONY DRYLIE** is a natural collector of unique and interesting objects, but when it comes to choosing a particularly special collection, he couldn't go past his set of small drawers:



Tony Drylie, of Warrnambool, has been collecting small drawers for 30 years and loves the unique character of each piece.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] T
[/dropcap]hey say necessity is the mother of all invention and a collection of small drawers and cabinets demonstrates how “storage needs” were dealt with well before Bunnings or Mitre 10.

Former Warrnambool second-hand dealer **Tony Drylie** has been collecting unique miniature drawers and cabinets for about 30 years and has more than a dozen, one-off pieces that span more than a century.

“The first one I bought was a birthday present for my wife, Claire, and it went from there,” he said, pointing to the beautiful kauri pine miniature wardrobe that remains one of the most striking pieces in his collection.

The wardrobe is not a functional piece, but perhaps a practice item for an apprentice. Others in the collection, however, were built purely for utilitarian purposes.

A series of steel sardine cans (remember them?) have been recycled into a series of small drawers for nails and screws, another was built as a rustic first aid kit and medicine cabinet, while another, much more refined-looking cabinet was designed to contain smoking pipes and tobacco: it even comes with a lock and key.



A selection from Tony's collection, including the recycled sardine can drawers and the more upmarket pipe and tobacco storage cabinet.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] T
[/dropcap]ony believes the oldest pieces date back to the late 1800s, while others reflect the Great Depression, when everything was re-used and recycled, including old industrial crates and boxes that were turned into furniture.

"I really like the fact that someone has sat down and gone to the effort of making it, usually out of second-hand timber, or whatever they had lying around, like the old steel sardine cans," Tony said.

The collection unites Tony's interest in the skill of fine woodcraft and his love of history.

"It would be really great to know the story behind each one: to know who built it and why," he said.



Tony with the kauri pine miniature wardrobe that he bought for his wife, Claire, and which started his collection.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] 0
[/dropcap]ne of his most precious pieces, however, is from his own family and is a wooden money box with moving parts that his grandfather made for Tony's late father, Bill. While it is showing signs of age, Tony intends to make only minor repairs, as he does with all of the pieces.

"Most of them are in original condition, which is how I like to keep them, rather than lose their authenticity," he said.

While Tony is no longer officially in the second-hand business, he hasn't given up scouring clearing sales, auctions and garage sales for the occasional treasure.

When asked if his collection of miniature drawers was complete, he gave the reply that any true collector will give: "Oh no! Not by a long shot!"

[box] Do you have a treasure? It might be sentimental, it might be valuable, it might be part of a collection, or it might be something you just can't live without. If you have a treasure that we can feature here, let us know! Email us at editor@bluestonemagazine.com.au[/box]

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A cafe that feels like coming home



Owner of the Tea-Tree Gallery and Cafe, Belinda White, who has created a quirky, memorable space in the heart of Portland.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] T
[/dropcap]here are not too many cafes in the main street of a town that have a huge front lawn and a century-old tree in the garden, but Portland is home to one such place.

And home is a perfect way to describe **The Tea-Tree Gallery Cafe** that is smack bang in the middle of Percy St, because that is exactly how the cafe looks and feels.

The single-storey stone building was built around 1870 as the Manse for the adjacent Uniting Church and even though it has not been used as a family home for many years, it still has its most of its original layout, including former bedrooms and a non-commercial kitchen.

The garden is also expansive and dominated by a stunning Spanish cork oak tree that was probably planted as an acorn by early settlers.



Feels like home: the former Manse has been converted

into a series of cafe rooms, each with their own character.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] C
[/dropcap]afe owner **Belinda White** made a conscious decision when she first rented the space five years ago to make the most of its homely appeal and turn it into an asset rather than a liability.

“So many cafes these days look exactly the same, feel exactly the same and all serve the same sort of food,” she says.

“We want people to come here and have a different experience, to feel the character of the place and to know that is something they won’t find anywhere else.”

Belinda, who is a dental nurse who detoured into hospitality, has created a quirky, memorable space that is packed with art, collectables and the smells of home cooking – everything she bakes comes straight out of the oven rather than a bain marie.

“I have tried to create a space in which I would feel comfortable and that includes the smells coming from the kitchen, be it soup, or cakes or the aromas from a roast. It makes people feel at home – I call it natural aromatherapy,” she says with a laugh.



Artist Tony Ashby (this work is entitled *Breakfast*) is a regular exhibitor at the cafe, that prides itself on promoting local artists.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] V
[dropcap]isual art is also a critical part of the equation and Belinda, who is an artist herself, offers wall space to any local artist who is keen for the exposure.

“When I opened five years ago, nobody else was displaying art in cafes in Portland and that has since changed, which is a wonderful thing, because it is bringing art to a whole new audience in a non-pretentious way,” she explains.

Belinda likes to call it “accidental art appreciation”, where people enjoying lunch or a coffee notice the name of the artist whose work is displayed on the wall above their heads. And because they see the art hanging in a home environment, they can envisage it in their own home and are more likely to buy it, she says.

“We have sold a lot of art since we first opened...and I am happy to take a piece off the wall and walk it into a another

room so they can see what it might look like in their own house,” she says.

Established artists **Tony Ashby** and **Brett Jarrett** are regular exhibitors, but Belinda is just as happy to support emerging and amateur artists.

“As long as the work is not violent or pornographic, you can do anything you want...it is about inclusion. We have had an 81-year-old exhibiting and we are about to have a three-year-old, who asked his mother if he could have a little show for his birthday.”

No wonder the cafe is such a hit with tourists, in particular, who have crammed the visitor’s book with positive comments about it being like nothing they have encountered before.

“I like to think that we are bringing back the art of hospitality. True hospitality is hard work, but I want to make the idea of going out for coffee, or lunch, to be special again, like it used to be,” Belinda says.



The expansive front lawn and gardens set the Tea-Tree Gallery and Cafe apart.

[box type="bio"] The Tea-Tree Gallery and Cafe is at 59 Percy St, Portland. Ph: (03) 5523 7376. Find them on [Facebook here](#)

or visit the website [here](#). [/box]

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A different way of doing things



Up it goes: The Fletcher Jones silver ball (sans silver) is hoisted into position in 1967 with campaigner Julie Eagles' sister watching the action.

OPINION

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]T[/dropcap]oday marks the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the former Fletcher Jones factory and iconic silver ball, with confirmation that it has been sold for about \$1 million to a man by the name of **Dean Montgomery**.

I say a new chapter, because Dean – even at face value – appears to be a person who does things very differently to what Warrnambool is used to in that he doesn't see heritage as an obstacle, but as an asset.

We know this because he is already involved with restoring and renovating the historic Leura Hotel in Camperdown. We also know this because, even more incredibly, Dean joined the

grassroots campaign, [Save the Silver Ball and Fletcher Jones Gardens](#) which is being driven via Facebook, prior to the announcement of the sale. He even posted a wonderful photograph of the ball that he was given by the volunteer groundsman at Pleasant Hill, **Lex Caldwell**.

This doesn't sound like a man who is about to bring in the bulldozers and knock the whole thing down to replace it with apartments or "big box" retail like that which dominates the outskirts of Warrnambool.

Indeed, in 2011, Dean was quoted in the [local Camperdown newspaper](#) as saying: "We're (he and his brother) both passionate about heritage buildings and restoring them, it's what we do."



The new owner of the former Fletcher Jones factory, Dean Montgomery, who is passionate about history. Image: Camperdown Chronicle.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]D[/dropcap]ean, to my mind, represents a generational change for how things can be done in Warrnambool, where a developer with a vision and the funds works *with* the community to create something special, and enduring, on what is one of the most prominent and important sites in the city.

This doesn't mean the whole derelict building will be preserved (nobody expected or wanted that), but it does mean that an iconic landmark that is so special to the community will be retained. Word has it that Dean already has cranes organised to start tidying up the ball.

That all of this is happening is testament to how grassroots activism can work when people unite for a common cause, and the Save the Silver Ball campaign has united people.

Living in Tasmania for about six years taught me everything I know about the ability of ordinary people to fight for something they loved, even if they were told that they were being unrealistic, out-of-touch or nostalgic at the expense of progress.

The people who fought, and continue to fight, for Tasmania's precious native forests have had everything thrown at them, including physical violence, yet they keep going because they know the battle is worth it. Native forests cannot be replaced simply by planting more trees: each forest is unique.



The Weld Angel (aka Allana Beltran) became a potent symbol of the campaign to save the Weld Valley in Tasmania from being logged. Image: Matthew Newton/Tasmanian Times.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A [dropcap]mong the bravest of those fighting for Tasmania's forests was a woman called **Allana Beltran** who became the potent symbol of the anti-logging movement after dressing as an angel, decorated with cockatoo feathers and a long white curtain, and hoisting herself high among the trees in the Weld Valley, in southern Tasmania, where she sat poised on a tripod in silent protest.

"The Weld Angel", so beautifully captured by freelance photographer **Matthew Newton** who's image went around the world, provided an evocative reminder of what would be lost if the value of everything in the world was measured only by economics.

In Warrnambool, the Fletcher Jones silver ball has proven to be a Weld Angel: a galvanising symbol of what is irreplaceable

and worth preserving.

More than 600 people fell in behind the campaign on Facebook to share their memories, photographs and ideas about how to preserve a unique part of the skyline and landscape.



An early image of the silver ball that was posted to the Save the Silver Ball page by new owner, Dean Montgomery.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] B
[/dropcap]ehind the scenes, campaigners **Julie Eagles** and **Tonia Wilcox** – among others – met with the powers that be, agitated, asked questions, wrote reports, emailed, filmed, phoned, photographed and held gatherings at the Warrnambool Hotel to thrash out how to keep the ball in the air. (And *Bluestone Magazine* was right behind them.)

Of course there were the critics and doubters who said it was

all too hard (for whom?) and would cost too much (compared to what?) and that it would be so much easier to just knock it all down and start over again, just like in the Tasmanian forests.

But some people think – and act – very differently and **Dean Montgomery** looks like one of those people.

A new chapter is not only starting for Fletcher Jones, but for the whole city.

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Imagine the skyline without the silver ball?

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A [dropcap]bove is a small tribute to the hard-working team behind the [Save the Silver Ball and Fletcher Jones Gardens campaign](#) who, today (8/5), have seen a reward for their efforts.

The purchase of the former Fletcher Jones Factory by businessman **Dean Montgomery** – a member of the Save the Silver Ball Facebook page – has provided hope that the ball will be preserved. Dean is a believer that history should be treasured and he has already shown that he is a man of action, not just words, by upgrading the Leura Hotel in Camperdown.

Today is the first step in what we hope is a new chapter in the life of the iconic ball.

Just imagine what the skyline would be like without it?



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Win a warming bottle of red



CLOSED FRIDAY MAY 9 – winner Sandra McGuire (and a second draw won by Rachel Peters)

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]
F[/dropcap]eel that nip in the air? For *Bluestone Magazine*,

this marks the time of year to enjoy a warming glass of red in front of the fire.

[Topsy Tips](#) has this week selected her Top 5 reds for under \$20, but of course she couldn't stop at five, so she added two more just to be on the safe side, including one that is just a little over \$20 but is a terrific local wine from Newton's Ridge in South-West Victoria.

[You can read the story here](#) and we are inviting our **paid subscribers** to email us with the name of one wine from the list that they would like to win.

Simply drop us a line at **editor@bluestonemagazine.com.au** by **Friday May 9** and we will announce the winner in our next edition on **Monday May 12**. Paid subscribers who live outside of South-West Victoria are also encouraged to enter, as we are happy to post the bottle to your door (just be sure to include a mailing address in your email).

This is just another small way of us thanking our paid subscribers because without you, there would be no us.

If you would like to become a member of the Bluestone club, you can subscribe (for just \$8 per month or \$85 a year), by simply [clicking here](#).

The winners of this competition were **Sandra Maguire** (Newton's Ridge Shiraz), and **Rachel Peters** (Saint Clair Pinot Noir).