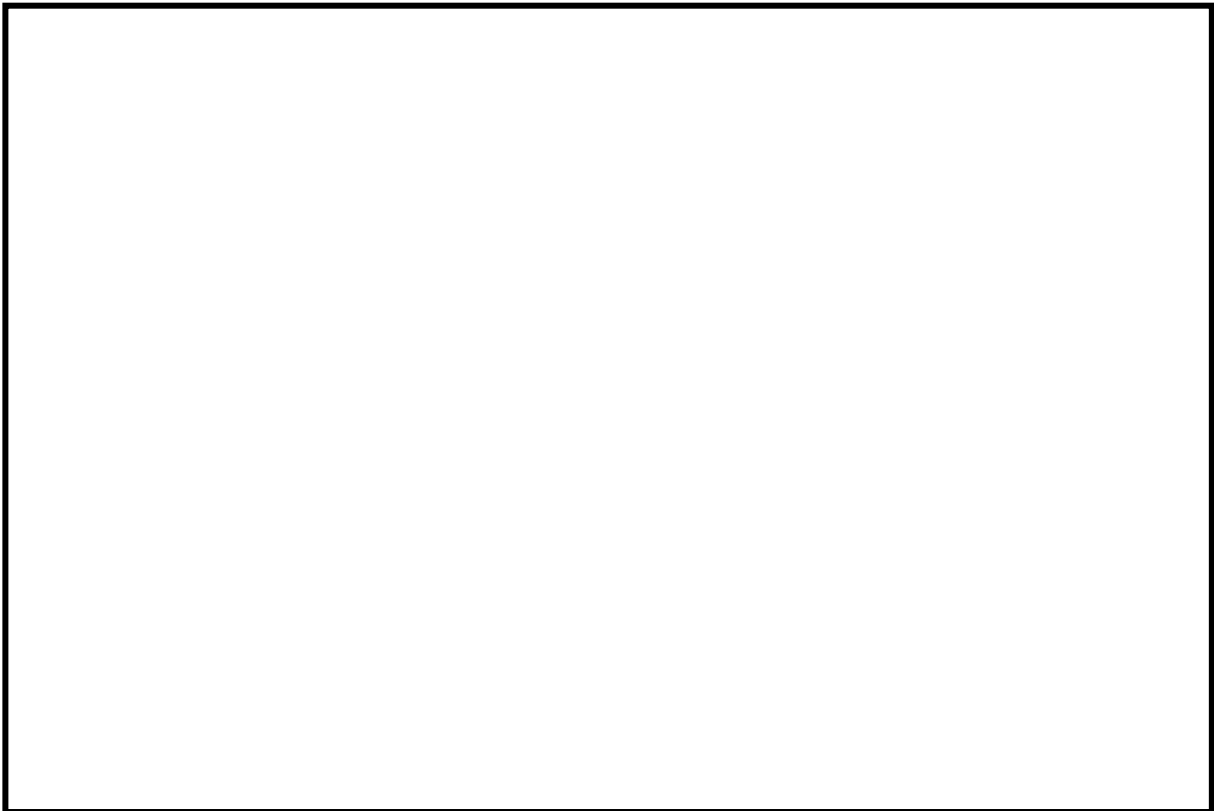# Tony's collection is top drawer

Description

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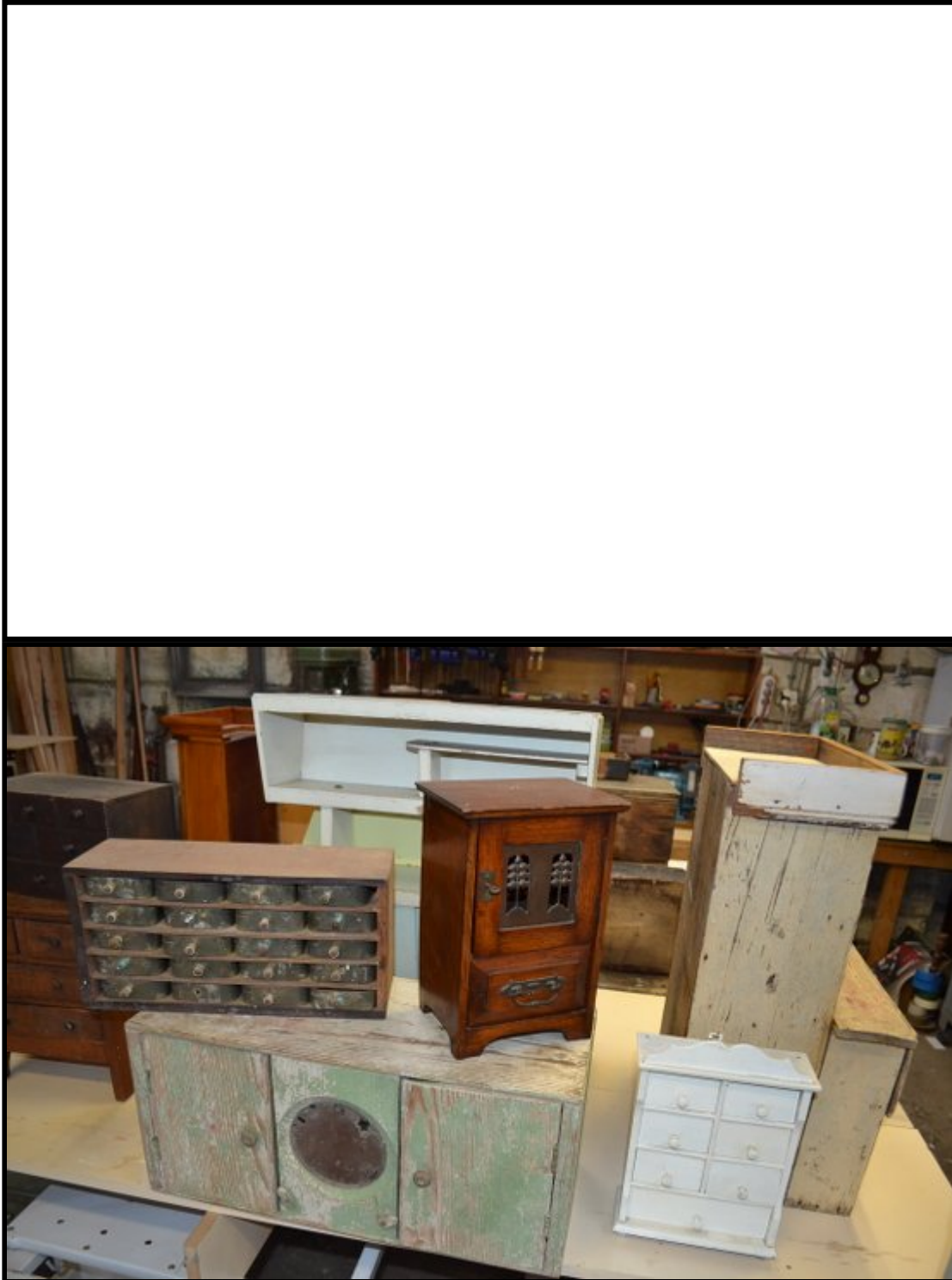
[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] T [/dropcap]hey say necessity is the mother of all invention and a collection of small drawers and cabinets demonstrates how "storage needs" were dealt with well before Bunnings or Mitre 10.

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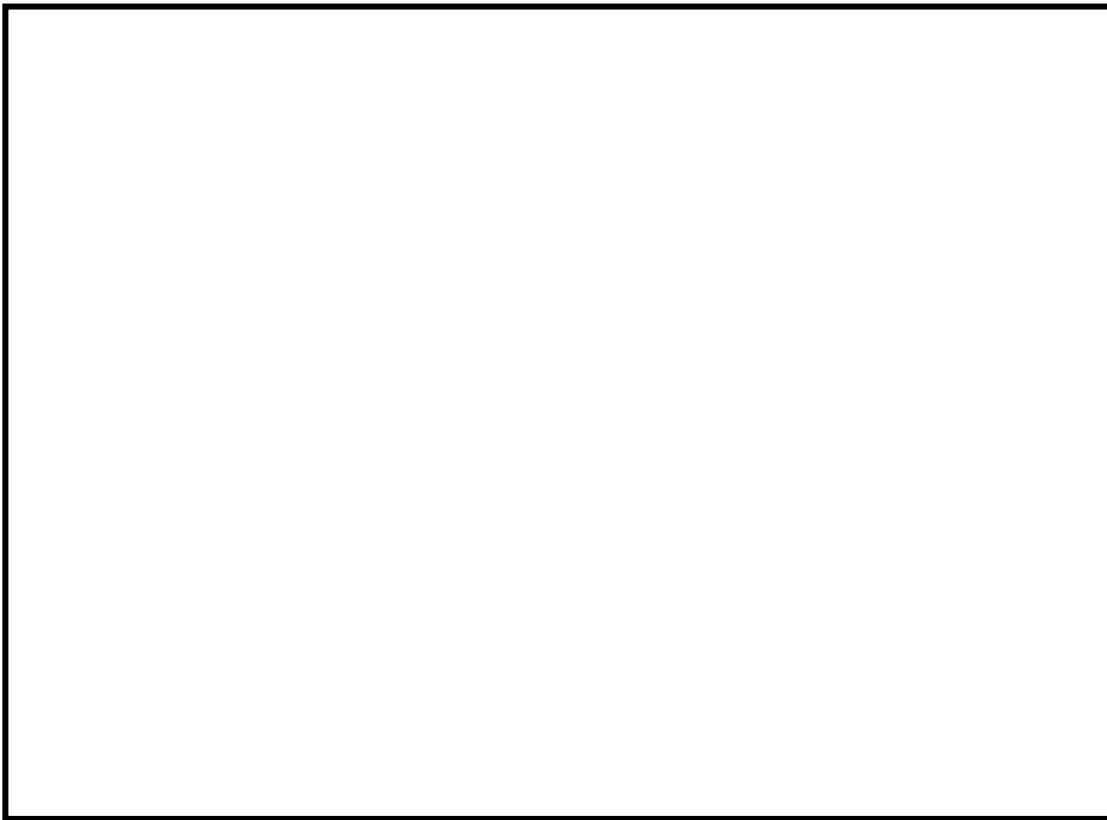
A selection from Tony's collection, including the recycled sardine can drawers and the more upmarket pipe and tobacco storage cabinet.

[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;"] O [/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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Date Created
2014/05/11
Author
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