

## BEST ANTIQUE STORE

### Vintage Hardware

Astoria, Oregon

**Runner-up:** Phog Bounders  
Antique Mall, Astoria  
**Honorable Mention:**  
Found, Cannon Beach

By DWIGHT CASWELL



Photo by Dwight Caswell

Vintage Hardware features salvaged materials upcycled into furniture, hardware for your draws and doors, local art, and vintage decor, clothing, dishes and more.

floats by Jim Hannen. Speaking of glass ball floats, the shop has a lot of them. Bins of them. "They're all the real deal," says co-owner Paul Tuter. They're old but shipped from Japan, avoiding the hazards of an unprotected ocean voyage.

You may not know that Vintage Hardware carries

vintage clothing, because the clothing used to be hidden away in the back. The number of items has been expanded and the collection now resides in its own area in the main showroom.

The newest endeavor for Vintage Hardware is its rental business. If you want a vintage look for your wedding, you can rent it here. If you want mounted wild game trophies for some reason, they've got those, too. Or, if you're looking to propose to



Photo by Dwight Caswell

If you're looking for authentic glass floats, Vintage Hardware should be your first stop. The Astoria store has bins of them from Japan.

the love of your life, you can do what one fellow did. He rented a sofa, put it on the beach, and popped the question on bended knee. Tuter's business partner, Becky Johnson, is involved in this end of the business, to the extent that she was one of the organizers of the recent ShoreStyle Wedding Faire in Astoria.

Vintage Hardware may be best known for the furniture Tuter builds out of salvaged materials, and that end of the business continues to thrive. He'll also repair, refinish, and/or repaint your furniture.

Ninety-eight percent of the inventory at Vintage Hardware is sourced locally, a fact that Johnson and Tuter are proud of, and the store is fast becoming a local institution. It's fun just to look around the place, at 101 15th St. in Astoria, and keep in mind that everything is 10 percent off on Tuesdays.

## BEST AUTOMOTIVE SHOP

### Jim Varner's Automotive

Astoria, Oregon

**Runner-up:** Lum's Auto Center, Warrenton  
**Honorable Mention:** Box K Auto Repair

By DWIGHT CASWELL

The first thing you notice when you walk into Jim Varner's Automotive is how orderly everything is. Rows of parts are lined and stacked, precisely arranged, and the floor looks clean enough to pass inspection in a commercial kitchen.

Varner has been in business almost 22 years. The reason for his success? "We do quality work," he says, "and we treat people the way we would want to be treated." Another secret, "is hiring people who are better than you at what you do." Both of Varner's head technicians, Andy Wullger and Joel Fischer, have been with him close to 20 years.

The repair facility is mechanical only, no body work or paint. "We work on almost everything, passenger cars and trucks," Varner says.

Varner's career choice was made a long time ago. "I liked fixing and working on anything mechanical: my trike, the lawnmower, mom's mixer." Then he got a motorcycle, and in the sixth grade he bought his first car. "I loved to take anything mechanical apart. I just had a need to figure out how things worked."

Varner began drag racing in high school, and he's still racing the same red 1954 Ford. His children have followed in his foot-



Photo by Dwight Caswell

Jim Varner of Jim Varner's Automotive has been in business in Astoria for almost 22 years.

steps. Both Elizabeth, 13, and Austin, 15, compete in the junior division at the Woodburn Dragstrip. "We spent 20 weekend last summer racing," he says.

Varner does performance upgrades and custom exhaust systems. The shop is equipped to bend, cut and fit exhaust pipes to improve both power and mileage without altering emissions. These pipes are not always for performance, though. Exhaust pipes are no longer made for many older vehicles, and Varner says, "We can make it fit perfect and work perfect, not like some pre-bent pipes off the shelf."

The wall by Varner's desk is crowded with certificates, including Readers Choice awards for every year since 2010. Looks like he'll have to rearrange things to fit another.

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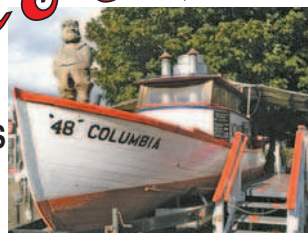
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