

BUY!



What's behind door number two?

Buying from room sellers

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ROOM HOPPING is the highlight of the Convention for many, and as a first-timer, I couldn't wait to check it out. I started off tentatively, feeling a bit shy. But I settled in, soon I was hopping like a pro. Here's what I learned (and what you need to know) for a great room-hopping experience.

If a door was open, you were welcome to come in. Some sellers decorated their doorways with lights and wreaths, but most just had a simple sign. Merchandise was displayed everywhere: folding tables and shelving units, curtain rods, and of course on the beds. Dresser tops and TV cabinets usually displayed prime merchandise.

Every room had something to offer. Some people specialized in certain categories of collecting, so if you were only on the hunt for, say, belsnickles, you could use the program to help narrow down certain sellers. Some items were museum-quality and sold for thousands of dollars, but there were just as many items for less than ten bucks. There was truly something for everyone.

Not all rooms were open all the time, so re-visiting the same floor of the hotel two hours (or two days) later could result in all-new places to shop.

Don't be worried that you are intruding on someone's personal space by visiting their room to shop. Remember that sellers are there for a reason. They *want* you to come in, to check out their merchandise, and perhaps do a little business! People were super friendly, and once they saw that first-timer ribbon, they wanted to know where I was from and what I collected. There was no pressure to buy, and people were anxious to show off their wares. A few even offered refreshments (most memorably, a cooler full of ice-cold Old Style Light)!

Room hopping gave me a chance to meet so many people, and to see all of the decorations, lights, and ornaments that I had only seen in Facebook posts. I actually bought very little, and what I did buy was inexpensive. But I had so much fun!



Things to remember

YOUR LIST. What's at the top of your wish list? The Glow convention is a once-a-year chance to see and hold before buying that hard-to-find thing that you really want. It is easy to get overwhelmed and come home with everything but that.

PAPER AND PEN. After a while, you will literally forget where you've been. Were those strands of pink lights on the fourth floor or the eighth? TIP: make notes and you won't be sorry later. (Even if you're not shopping, taking notes is a great way to do research and remember details about things that you'd like to start collecting in the future.)

CASH. Most of the people selling are individuals, not businesses, and as such they may not have the ability to take credit cards. Personal checks may be accepted but it's best to be prepared to pay cash.

AN EXTRA BAG OR SUITCASE! A tote bag may be helpful as you're shopping (not all sellers may have bags available), but trust me, you'll need a safe way to transport all your new goodies safely home.

What about bargaining?

THAT'S ALWAYS the unspoken question whenever you're buying vintage merchandise, whether you're at a garage sale, flea market, or convention. All I can tell you is this: It doesn't hurt to ask! Sellers need to make a fair profit on their merchandise, but they also don't want to carry it home. A friendly smile, a compliment on the quality of their goods, and a simple "Is this your best price on this?" is totally acceptable. Just be polite and if the answer is "no," say thank you and move on to the next room. There may just be something better (and within your budget) right around the corner!