

HOMIE

THE LOCAL VAULT • SWEET ACCENTS



Betsy Perry, Patricia Espinosa, Julie Rubich, Joannie Buhrendorf

Keys to the Vault

Four friends figure out how to combine high-end consignment with the ease of online shopping. And it's all local!

At one time that designer love-seat was truly loved, but now you're over it. That's okay. Tastes, décor and domiciles change. Yet there's no need to kick (or drag) that gently used treasure to the curb. Riverside friends Julie Rubich, Patricia Espinosa and Betsy Perry and Fairfielder Joannie Buhrendorf (Betsy's sister) have created the perfect spot for it.

The enterprising foursome recently launched **THE LOCAL VAULT**, a secondhand online marketplace conceived as a well-appointed virtual showroom for Fairfield County buyers and sellers interested in the consigned furnishings market.

They hope locals will think of their venture as a stylish alternative to larger bidding portals. "We're presenting a great place to get rid of your stuff or find great pieces," says Betsy. "And we're



keeping it local because you really don't need a sofa from Atlanta."

The partners, with backgrounds in real estate, retail, event planning and DIY design, are actively engaged in cultivating TLV's gently used, high-quality inventory. They set prices (splitting profits 60/40 in favor of the seller) and

have no qualms about turning items away. (So there's no junk.)

They present their finds in a blog format, with photographs displayed in editorial quality vignettes. They've even partnered with area design retailers for loaned accessories that elevate an item's reimagined potential. Retailers, in turn, steer clients looking to part with furnishings TLV's way. "The idea is that it's a win-win for everybody," says Patricia. thelocalvault.com.

—Beth Cooney Fitzpatrick

CRACKING THE CODE

Want to explore the consigned furnishings market? The TLV team offers these tips for transforming something old into something new.



SELLERS

GET FAMILIAR WITH THE SECONDARY MARKET. Do your homework on sites such as eBay to educate yourself about what's out there (and the going rate).

MANAGE THOSE EXPECTATIONS. "You may have paid \$15,000 for that amazing sofa fifteen years ago, but remember that was fifteen years ago," says Patricia.

PRESENT YOUR GOODS IN THE BEST POSSIBLE CONDITION. Clean, polish and replace broken hardware.



BUYERS

LOOK BEYOND WORN FABRICS OR CHIPPED PAINT to eye pieces for overall quality and refurbishing potential.

INVEST IN TRADITIONAL PIECES WITH CLASSIC LINES. They never go out of style.

STUDY UP ON QUALITY DESIGNERS and keep your eyes out for "high-end anything," pieces that are timeless and not just faddish.