

Great Canadian Roadshow makes its way to St. Catharines

Gemologist on location for multiday event

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Residents with old heirlooms collecting dust may find they're worth money this week as the Great Canadian Roadshow rolls into St. Catharines. The four-day event starts Wednesday at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites on Ontario Street. (Royalty Free Image)

ST. CATHARINES — That old family heirloom collecting dust in the attic could be worth quite a lot of money.

Just ask Max Smirnov of the Great Canadian Roadshow. The travelling company scours across Canadian cities, looking for unique and authentic collectibles. On Wednesday, the road show will once again make its way back to St. Catharines for a four-day stop at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites on Ontario Street. Smirnov said they'd have a great deal of success in the city in the past.

"St. Catharines is always a good stop," he said. "The type of people and the type of items we see are always unique. I think it's because of the unique demographic of people, coming from both Canada and the United States"

He said on their most recent visit, they saw a wide variety of items ranging from a sword used during the Civil War to an extremely rare and collectible Dutch family death ring.

Founded 10 years ago, the road show makes its way across Canada. In recent years, it has visited Asia and Europe as well. People are invited to attend the free event, and bring their collectibles and antiques along with them to be evaluated. The road show employs a gemologist on staff, as well as a personal property appraiser, with experience in war memorabilia, coins, musical instruments and other collectibles.

Six years ago, Smirnov said they had someone come into a St. Catharines event with a Jimi Hendrix Les Paul Guitar. The instrument was authenticated, appraised and ended up being sold for a hefty sum. At a recent Niagara Falls stop, they saw a vampire killing kit come through.

"Some of the more interesting items we've seen are the items people bring in, having no idea what they are," said Smirnov, pointing to the time someone brought in an old dusty wooden item, unsure of what it could be. It ended up being identified as an early model butter turner.

"We tell people to bring whatever they can find, and they literally do bring in whatever they can," he said.

The road show staff works to connect people interested in selling their items with collectors from a database of more than 2,000 interested buyers from across the country. Smirnov compares it to a boutique eBay scenario, where they try to get the best deal possible for the seller and Great Canadian Roadshow takes a 15 per cent commission.

The St. Catharines event runs from July 12 to July 15 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free and there is no limit on the number of items that can be evaluated.



by [Melinda Cheevers](#)

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