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A TOUCH OF WOOD

WHILE BUILDING HIS HOME BAR, DAN DELASANTOS INCORPORATED BARN WOOD FROM LAKE HAVASU CITY CO-FOUNDER CV WOOD'S CHILDHOOD HOME IN OKLAHOMA

Dan Delasantos compiled a collection of antiques, artifacts and mementos that any collector or historian would be honored to display. These treasures represent 30 years of accumulated effort and decorate his personal bar, which was created in Hawaii, relocated to Colorado and reassembled in Lake Havasu City.

The bar's oldest pieces date back to 1935 and came from his godfather, Rolly Noce, who first inspired his interest in bars.

"I admired his elaborate personal family bar and recently received a few items from his bar to adorn my own creation," Delasantos said. "I have always had a fascination with bars. They represent many cultures and amazing artistic aspects of life."

The proud Havasu Pioneer attended grade school in the city and



CV Wood's childhood home in Waynoka, Oklahoma.

graduated from Lake Havasu High School in 1976. He worked at the Campbell Boat Company and the Citizens Utilities Company before moving to Hawaii.

While working for Better Brands, Hawaii's premier liquor distributor, Delasantos created the first version of his bar and soon added several bar mirrors. He acquired an antique,

STORY BY BUCK DOPP

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICK POWELL & BUCK DOPP

tully functional tapper man-
ufactured prior to World
War II with tiki heads repre-
senting Polynesian supernat-
ural figures.

Other Hawaiian acqui-
sitions include a Martin
ukulele that was a gift from
his Hawaiian grandmother,
and a photo of his great-
great-grandmother, who was
a Hawaiian princess.

He also made the great-
est find of his life in Ha-
waii—his wife Mary. Their
30-year love story is his
greatest treasure: “My wife
is the inspiration for getting
things completed and done.”

When asked about her
role in developing the bar,
Mary quipped, “I’m the one
that goes, ‘Oh, that looks
great where you have it.’
That’s my job.”

She laughed and then
explained, “He spends a
lot of time deciding where
things go.”

The bar’s recessed light-
ing enhances the grains in
the wood and highlights the
mementos on the shelves.
The beer fridge is housed in
an old outhouse illuminat-
ed by LED green lights for
effect.

There is even a practice
bomb from the U.S.S. Hor-
net.

“I was given the bomb
when I was seven years old
by one of the sailors who was
on the Hornet’s last Apollo
recovery mission,” Dan not-
ed. “He waltzed right off the
gangplank with it.”

One of Dan’s special
keepsakes is a genuine
buffalo skull prominently
displayed on the center of
the wall above the bar. He
bought the skull for one-



When Dan and Mary Delasantos returned to Lake Havasu City in 2016, he had to disassemble the bar and reconstruct it. He says each piece in the unit has a story — like the barn wood bar with beam rail nearly petrified, shown at right, and the beer refrigerator designed like an outhouse, above.



third of its retail cost of \$225.

"My wife's a vegan, so it's really the only thing she's against in the bar," he said. "Of course, it's my centerpiece because it's beautiful."

"I'm actually a health coach and a certified nutritionist, and a vegan," Mary corrected, adding that the quality she admires most about her husband is "his loyalty to his family and friends."

Dan's favorite piece is a hunk of mesquite taken from Parker's Planet Ranch Conservation and Wildlife Area, which sits on the center of the bar. He collected the chunk of wood at 16 when he and his buddies cut and sold wood to raise money for a houseboat they built.

"When you grew up in this town 40 to 50 years ago and someone told you to go outside and play, you had to find something to do," Dan said with a smile. "You became innovative."

After living in Hawaii for 10 years, Dan and Mary moved to Castle Rock, Colorado where he worked as a photojournalist for Sand Sports Magazine. While on an assignment to cover an off-road event at Little Sahara State Park in Waynoka, Oklahoma, Dan realized there were opportunities for some good values in the real estate market. They purchased a few weekend rental properties and a couple of farms in Waynoka (pronounced way-NO-ka).

"There was so much off-roading in the area, we knew it would be a good place to have a property,"



Mary noted.

It was in Waynoka that Dan made another great find.

"I happened to wander into the town's museum and met the curator. When I told her I grew up in Lake Havasu she asked if I knew CV Wood. I responded with a cheerful 'yes ma'am!'

"She then asked if I knew where he was from. I didn't have a clue. 'Right here in Waynoka,' she replied. 'Do you know where he was born?' Again, I had a blank look on my face and replied, 'No, ma'am. I don't.'

"She said, 'He was born in the house right across the way from your barn on



Above, CV Wood is shown with Lake Havasu City founder Robert McCulloch. The two men were responsible for building Lake Havasu City, including bringing the London Bridge to Arizona, piece by piece. Delasantos says he copied that approach when it came to reassembling his elaborate bar in a multi-state move. His bar is filled with artifacts, including a chunk of mesquite he pulled from Planet Ranch near Parker when he was 16, and an American bison skull prominently displayed on the wall.

December 17, 1920.”

CV was known as the “Chili Cook-Off King of Waynoka” long before gaining fame as the master planner of Disneyland and partnering with Robert McCulloch to design and develop Havasu.

That curator, Sandie Olson, is also the president of the Waynoka Historical Society. “Meeting Dan was a real game-changer, the beginning of solving a puzzle that began years ago when an older Waynoka woman told me that CV Wood was in town for a funeral. I didn’t know who he was,” she said.

Thanks to the serendipitous journalism assignment and subsequent real estate purchases in Waynoka, Dan was able to add Old West souvenirs, a lantern and a 60-year old co-op sign to the bar. The most valuable piece of all was the 106-year old barn wood from his property across from CV’s childhood home. According to Dan, it would cost \$15,000 to purchase and install that much barn wood.

After tearing down his dilapidated barn and removing most of the nails, Dan incorporated the wood into his bar in Colorado.



Dan and Mary Delasantos

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Roomy, rustic and built with comfort in mind, Delasantos' bar is a great summertime escape. Right, the bar includes antique taps manufactured prior to World War II with tiki heads representing Polynesian supernatural figures.



Some of the wood came from railroad cars. He even discovered beams that had been buried for over 50 years and used one for his bar rail. "What makes the bar special to me is that the wood came from where CV Wood was born and raised," he said. "If I didn't have this wood in here, it would look just like anyone else's bar."

When Dan and Mary relocated to Havasu in 2016 after spending 20 years in Colorado, he had to disassemble the bar and reconstruct it. He "took a page out of CV" and numbered every article — as CV had done with the London Bridge — then reassembled all the pieces and parts in the same configuration. The painstaking reassembly took three months.

Hanging the bomb and mounting the railroad tracks in the ceiling are the next planned projects.

The bar will never be finished. It's "an ongoing work of art" that changes with each new artifact. Dan will continue choosing pieces that have a cultural, historical or personal significance.

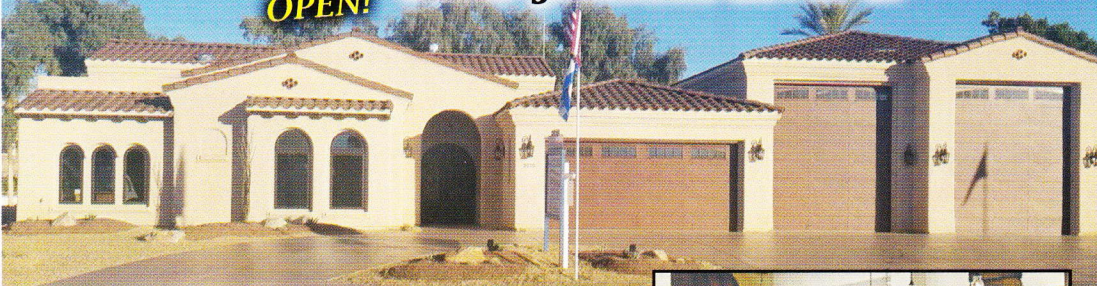
"Each item has a story behind it," he said. "We could go on for hours about what every piece means."

"I like to hear Dan telling his stories," Mary said. "And what's interesting—it usually starts with him going to get a beer."

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