



J & P's Edelweiss Closing After 20 Years in Business

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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James Heinemeier, co-owner and co-founder of J & P's Edelweiss antique store in Alton along with his wife Patricia, is looking to close the store later this year and retire after 20 years in business.

J & P's Edelweiss is having a large clearance sale to help Heinemeier reach his goal of emptying the store's packed shelves by this October. Right now, all items are 20% off until the end of March - on April 1, that discount will increase to 25%. This May, all items will be 30% off and any remaining items after that point will be sold at auction.

Heinemeier got into the antique business by selling antiques at booths in local antique stores, eventually opening his first antique shop in the Mineral Springs Mall in the 1990s. He bought the old Alton Tire Sales Co. building at 435 East Broadway in 2002 and opened J & P's Edelweiss - since then, his collection has expanded considerably.

"To understand my store, words can't do it - you need to come down and just go through it one time," Heinemeier said. "I have over 20,000 items in here."

"If you've ever been in there, my shop's - to be truthful with you, it's been too full - but that's why the customer liked it," he said.

Over the years, Heinemeier said he's been appreciative of visitors both from around the Riverbend and around the world.

"I have to be very appreciative of the customers over the years, because I couldn't have this much stuff in here if I didn't have people," he said. "It's people local, it's people who travel through Alton ... I've had a lot of people from northern Illinois, all over. I've had people from islands in Alaska come in here."

With the end of his lease on the building approaching his 70th birthday, Heinemeier decided it was the right time to close the store and retire. He said he looks forward to spending more time with his grandchildren and other things he wasn't able to do while running the store, but he isn't optimistic about the future of the Alton antique scene.

“After I close down, there's only going to be two or three shops that are really antique shops,” Heinemeier said. “People aren't going to come to Alton for antiques, because they're telling me that. When I bought this building in 2002, there were 28 stores - now we're down to this.”

Visit J & P's Edelweiss at 435 East Broadway in Alton (across from Bluff City Grill) for increasing discounts on antique items from now until the end of May. To find out more, call (618) 741-8749.