



Guest Contributor PJC, Miami FL: I've been to London many times over the decades, and each visit brings new and nostalgic experiences.

As a college art student in the late 50s, I haunted the British Museum, Tate Galleries and London art and antique stores. Later, my business career took me to London frequently. Now, in the decade since I retired, London is my bargain shopping destination almost every year.

Although they have wonderful goods, I don't spend too much time in pricey stores in Knightsbridge and Bond Street. Instead, I prefer three locations, all open daily, where I seek out interesting and reasonably-priced items. Portobello Road Market: Portobello Rd., London W10, theportobellomarket.co.uk. This two-mile-long street of open stalls and shops in Notting Hill offers great bargains. Strolling along, sights include jewelry, original art, fresh produce, family heirlooms and flea market treasures. For senior shoppers looking for antiques, Saturdays are when the major dealers show their very best wares.

On a recent visit, I looked for the traditional Cockney street musicians and dancers, called buskers, who had performed since the market opened a century and a half ago. Instead, most sidewalk entertainment was provided by groups offering more contemporary rock, along with African and Middle Eastern music. It wasn't nostalgic, but just as enjoyable.

Covent Garden, 1 Tavistock Street, Westminster, WC2E 7, UK, coventgardenlondonuk.com. When Liza Doolittle sang, "Wouldn't It Be Lovely", in "My Fair Lady", she did it near her flower stall in Covent Garden. Every time I return, I find the market as "lovely" as ever.

There are many activities and goods for seniors to enjoy there in the formal columned building and open air plazas. The experience is well worth a full day of bargain hunting, sightseeing, pub crawling and dining.

Started as a flower, fruit and vegetable garden in the 1600s, Covent Garden is considerably more diverse today, and is a favorite London tourist attraction. Inexpensive original arts and crafts are offered, along with bargain electronics, toys and all kinds of fun, funky and used clothing.

There are daily presentations by street performers, ranging from 21st Century rock bands to Medieval Punch and Judy shows. On my most recent trip, I enjoyed lunch and senior moments in a glass-domed cafe while listening to a nearby Chinese string quartet.

Camden Markets, Camden Lock Place, Camden Town, London NW1 8AF, camdenlock.net. One of the newest of London's bargain oases, Camden Markets began in 1974 as a line of canal-side produce stands. Now, as many as half a million people show up each week to seek out the bargains.

Camden Markets feature clothing and jewelry stalls, quaint antique shops, smoky pubs and fashionable restaurants. It claims to be the largest street market in the United Kingdom. Once there, you'll want to spend hours searching for the ultimate senior bargains.