

TV PREMIERE

Decorate with Texas swagger

'Junk Gypsies' features finds from Round Top

By **BRITTANY COBB**
Special Contributor

The Central Texas queens of turning trash into treasure — better known in design circles as the Junk Gypsies — embark on a 13-episode decorating adventure at 6 p.m. Saturday on HGTV.

For each 30-minute segment, sisters Amie Sikes and Jolie Sikes-Smith receive a decorating makeover challenge — tricking out an old Airstream for country crooner Dierks Bentley, turning a living room into a jet-setter's paradise — and then hit Texas road stops from old gas stations to flea markets searching for lackluster loot in need of some love.

After hauling their truck full of treasures back to Round Top, a tiny village made famous by three decades of high-quality antiques fairs, the duo upcycles the items into unique home furnishings, such as a plat-



Texas sisters Amie Sikes (left) and Jolie Sikes-Smith star in their own HGTV show, premiering at 6 p.m. Saturday.

form bed crafted from old shipping pallets. At the end of each show, the women reveal their spirited, bohemian environments with a sprinkle of Lone Star swagger.

"I think viewers will love the show because it's about two women chasing their dreams, the glory of Texas back roads and the magic that lies within the little junk shops along the way," says Amie. "It's about making your home a place that truly

speaks to your soul through nothing more than discarded items and a little elbow grease."

On gypsyville.com, the sisters have home goods, jewelry, fashion accessories, cowboy boots, biker tanks and tongue-in-cheek trashy tees, as well as photos and commentary about their shopping stops.

Brittany Cobb is a Highland Park freelancer writer.

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LIVING GREEN

Where to buy

Soap Nuts is available from greenvirginproducts.com in package sizes ranging from a sampler size (\$1.89), for trying out the product in four to seven wash loads, up to a 1-kilo bag (about 2.2 pounds), \$27.95, for up to 330 loads. Prices do not include shipping.

Soap Nuts is nontoxic, nonpolluting and hypoallergenic, says the company that sells it.



Clean and be green

Company calls Soap Nuts an environmental winner

By **TIM TUNE**
Special Contributor

As consumer product corporations spin out new high-tech and earth-friendly laundry detergents from labs, a Florida company says its all-natural product picked from a tree cleans clothes just as well and costs less to use.

Green Virgin says its Soap Nuts product also softens the wash as it cleans and is completely green environmentally, nontoxic, nonpolluting and hypoallergenic. And the product is cheaper to use than a leading detergent, the company says.

Soap nuts are produced from the fruit of the Chinese soapberry tree, *Sapindus mukorossi*. The berries contain saponin, a naturally occurring substance that has a soaplike lathering quality. Green Virgin's news release says "saponin has cleaning abilities equal to toxic chemical detergents."

The Tampa company says it sells "only the highest quality soap nuts available in the world" imported from a century-old, billion-dollar Indian company whose berries are harvested from trees in the foothills of the Himalaya Mountains. The berries are dried in the sun, undergo little processing and contain no added chemicals, the company says.

The company says its 250-gram bag (just over a half pound) has enough multiloop soap nuts to do at least 83 washes. At \$10.95 for the bag, that's just more than 13 cents per load. The company says that's about 7 cents less per load than Tide at its average price. Plus, the company claims "clothes will be softer and more absorbent than ever" without using fabric softener or dryer sheets, so there's no need to buy those products. Green Virgin's calculations don't

factor in shipping costs for its products.

To use the product, place three to five soap nuts into the drawstring wash bag included in the package and toss it into the machine just as with a detergent tablet or pouch. The company recommends breaking the nuts in half before putting them in the drawstring wash bag, which allows water to circulate through the exposed inside of the nut and release saponin more easily.

The company says soap nuts clean equally well in top-loading and front-loading washing machines. Soap nuts can be reused and are effective for more loads in front-loaders — up to seven. Expect about five effective loads using and reusing the same soap nuts in a top-loader.

Tim Tune is a Fort Worth freelance writer.

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HOME CALENDAR



Tuesday Morning's antiques sale will feature more than 1,500 pieces.

show, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and May 12. Nest, 4524 McKinney Ave., Dallas. Free. nestdallas.com.

SWISS AVENUE HOMES: Explore some of Dallas' most famous early 20th-century homes in the annual Mother's Day weekend event. Local artists will set up in Savage Park offering their designs. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. May 12 and noon to 6 p.m. May 13. \$20 in advance, \$25 at door. For a complete list of homes, see sahd.org.

HISTORIC HOMES: The Fair-

mount neighborhood in Fort Worth's Southside will host its 30th annual home tour. The event features restored turn-of-the-century homes and new construction in a similar style. Noon to 6 p.m. May 12 and 13. Tickets are \$12 in advance, \$18 at the door. For a complete list of addresses and to buy tickets, go to historicfairmount.com.

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