

Winchester: Village square theme favors mall

Recession delays grand opening

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Photos: DOUG BAUMAN

Years ago, when Rochester was a tiny village in the wilderness, it was the central market for farmers in surrounding areas who wished to trade produce for dry goods, equipment or animals.

Now Southfield developers Winchester Associates Ltd. seek to recreate that atmosphere in a modern key with its new medium-sized Winchester Mall in Avon Township, less than a mile from downtown Rochester.

Grand opening for the \$14 million mall, which will house 40 to 50 retail shops when fully leased, is Aug. 1.

Mastermind behind the mall's village square theme is the architectural firm Nathan Levine & Associates Inc. of Southfield. To achieve the shopping square idea, four shopping arcades converge at a central court, which features wood benches, live green plants and a fountain.

Levine says he sought to fit the structure of the mall as much as possible into the rolling topography of the site, at the southwest corner of Rochester and Avon roads.

This was done, he says, through graduated levels within the mall highlighted by an aesthetic and functional use of ramps and stairs to compensate for changes in grade and topography.

OTHER DESIGN features evoke a mood

of being outdoors. Plants, fountain, earth tones of the brick and large, aggregate, precast-terrazzo floors.

Glass skylights wash the central court with a pattern of sunlight as well as providing light for plants and people. Interior light fixtures have clear globe bulbs clustered around tree-like posts. These are the same lights as in the parking lot, further easing the transition from outdoors to indoors.

Winchester's design, says Levine, differs from that of other malls in its "simplicity, naturalness and its marriage to its physical environment."

From preliminary sketches to construction drawings, it took Levine's firm one

year to design the mall. Other projects drawn up by the firm include Avon's Bedford Square and part of the downtown revitalization project in Jackson.

"The trend in shopping centers now is away from large regional centers," says Fran Zale, mall manager. "Winchester's uniqueness lies in its capacity to give more personalized service."

She says Winchester hopes the center will attract retailers from the immediate area as well as regional merchants. So far, biggest retailer to locate in the Winchester complex is Kmart, open for months adjacent to the mall. Farmer Jack Supermarket, which also has been open for a while next to the mall, is a close second.

OTHER BUSINESSES in the complex now open for business include Towne & Country Interiors, next to the mall; Pondrona Steakhouse and Burger Chef restaurant, on the mall's perimeter; and Manufacturers' National Bank and Standard Federal Savings & Loan, also on the mall's perimeter.

The mall's grand opening comes close to three years after the completion of the mall's construction, says Ms. Zale.

Reason for the delay was the economic recession, which made potential retail tenants wary of expanding their businesses or unable to secure financial backing to do so, she says.

Asking a person to take on the expense of opening or relocating their business during a recession is like trying to sell a skit to someone with a broken leg," says Ms. Zale.

Winchester's prospects, however, rebounded with retail sales in late year's fourth quarter. Now Winchester is signing tenants at a happy clip, she says. Ms. Zale hopes the mall will be 50 per cent leased by the grand opening.

Retailers as a rule are very adventurous and aggressive people. If they see there's a silver lining, they're willing to take a chance," she says.

STORES OPENING Aug. 1 include: Pearle Vision Center, Lawler's Card and Book Place, Record Market, Fireade

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Books: 5-Star Draperies, Albert's, Marianne's, The Trend, a clothing store. The Globe, an import shop. Willow's of Rochester, a plant and flower shop. Winchester Salon of Beauty and Bressler's 32 Flavors.

Winkelman's, I.G. Hag and the Stag Shop will open at a later date.

Despite the recent abundance of shopping center construction in the area, Ms. Zale says she believes Winchester can hold its own against the competition.

Shopping centers go where there is a future possibility of success, she says. And Winchester did demographic studies years ago which showed this to be a prime location.

Winchester projected a 200 per cent increase in the number of households in the area between 1973 and 1980. Moreover, the studies showed the types of people moving into the area were those in professions or management—people with a lot of money to spend.

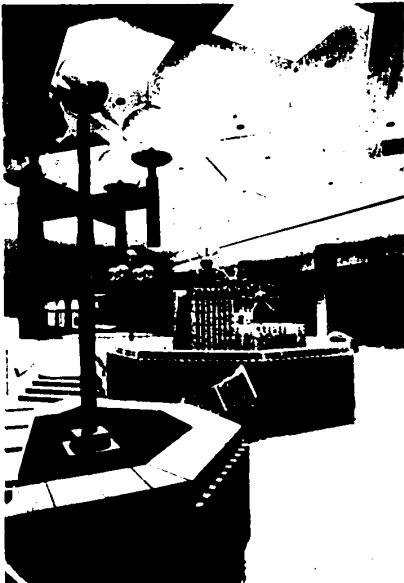
But Winchester isn't banking on demographics alone to keep it afloat. Ms. Zale says she plans to capture as much as possible in the greater Rochester atmosphere with a series of activities promoting the mall and the area at the same time. Some of these, she says, will include a red art show, a water festival, concert series, entertainment for children and adults, and even golf and tennis clinics.



Decorator globe lights used both inside and outside the mall make it easy on the eyes of shoppers.



NATHAN LEVINE



Sunlight from skylights floods Winchester Mall's unfinished Grand Court.

Youth, skill, ambition

A winning combination

By KATHY PARKER

Youth, skill and ambition are prerequisites for success in any field, but in the business world they're indispensable. In Robert Rose's world, they're a winning combination.

Rose recently completed the finishing touches to his first business venture, Robert R. Rose Jewelers. The store opening writes another page in the history of the Rose family of Southfield, experts in the jewelry business in the metropolitan Detroit area for almost 70 years.

Rose, 26, is a descendant of Nathan Rose, a jeweler who opened the first Rose Jeweler in Detroit in 1908. Young Rose spent much of his school years, at Southfield High School and Ferris and Wayne State universities, working with the family company and later with Zale's Corp. who purchased the firm.

"I'VE BEEN in the jewelry business all my life," Rose said. "I always knew that someday I would open my own store."

The drive and perseverance that goal required are part of Rose's nature. When the opportunity to open a store in the Rochester business district was presented to him, he quickly laid plans and made arrange-

ments to renovate, then ruled up his sleeves and set to work. Six months of spackling, painting, carpet laying and decorating followed, most of it under Rose's supervision and all of it with his help. Much of the interior is of his own design.

"I'm really a perfectionist," Rose said. "I wanted everything in the store from the carpeting on the floor to the lights in the ceiling to reflect the tastes of the customers we service. Contemporary yet elegant."

Fifty per cent of Rose's merchandise will be in diamonds—not unusual for a man who has known and worked with the stone since he was old enough to hold one in his hand. Crystal, prater and fine fashion jewelry for men and women will fill velvet-lined cabinets and wall cases, giving elegant polish to a building that was gutted by fire several years ago.

Rose will also carry a complete selection of watches and gold and silver gift items in addition to fine china and flatware.

ROSE DESIGNED many customer conveniences features into the interior, demonstrating a market knowledge that belies his 26 years. Specially sized floor cases displaying wedding and engagement rings permit customers to be seated during the se-

lection process. Mirrored wall panels open outward for storage and easy access to fast moving items. Rose also offers a complete custom-designing and setting service for customers who prefer their jewelry custom-made.

A special feature of the store is a hexagonal central exhibit case where Rose will display unusual and exceptional items of jewelry. For further eye-catching he has installed a one-of-a-kind candlelight chandelier—a shimmering collection of crystal beads highlighting the exhibit case. The store's ceiling is studded with more than 100 tiny lights for the most effective means of diamond display.

Although Robert R. Rose Jewelers of Rochester is his first business venture, Rose suggests that it might not be his last.

"I prefer to have my own small place," he said, "and now I have it. I really haven't had a lot of extra time to make plans for future stores, but this is a large, successful, who knows? This is a large, expanding area and consumers need places to shop."

The 2500-square foot store at 136 Main St. is the latest addition to Rochester's business area. A grand opening celebration is in the planning stages.



Watches are just one of the lines of jewelry Robert Rose (above) carries. (Staff photo by Doug Bauman).

Trade those paperbacks!

By KATHY PARKER

An inventive system of exchange is becoming the trademark of one of Rochester's newest businesses.

The Paperback Book Exchange, situated in the annex of a rambling old house on the corner of Pine and West University, offers area book buffs a chance to take advantage of the trade value of their paperbacks while filling their shelves with hours of new reading.

"Books should never be thrown away," said Jean Knuff (right), partner in the business. "Most people just box their books once they have read them and store them in the attic. We decided to open a store that supplied, at minimum cost, paperbacks in excellent condition for both the book collector and the avid reader."

Beginning on a shoestring and with 1,500 of their own books, Mrs. Knuff and her partner, Elizabeth Robinson, officially

opened the Exchange May 1. Since then, hundreds of books have passed in and out of the store, and reading categories have grown in size and scope.

"WITH THE trade policy, there is always a constant flow of good books," Mrs. Knuff said. "Every customer has something different, and current best-sellers and classics are constantly moving in and out."

The Paperback Book Exchange also has a credit system that permits traders to begin in books and "hold" until a selection of their choice comes into the store. The credit sheet can be marked for any number of books and can be redeemed at any time.

Although Mrs. Knuff stresses that exchange is the best policy, the owners do buy books from customers, provided they are in excellent condition. Paperbacks are also sold at the store, at half of the original cost. A "distressed books" section

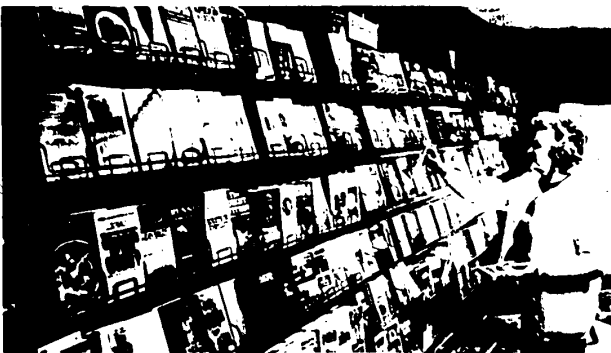
offers readers the opportunity to pick up some of their favorites, minus the back cover or the title page.

The store handles all types of books, with categories in sports, mystery, suspense, science fiction, text and reference, recent popular, and the complete Harlequin Romance series.

"When we opened the store, we had no idea the Harlequins were so popular," Mrs. Knuff said. "It's amazing—customers bring their romance number sheets with them and run through looking for the next number in the series."

The proprietors are always eager to see new books come and go.

"With the price of a paperback as high as a hard-cover book, the barter system is ideal," Mrs. Knuff said. "Besides, a true book lover can never turn down a bargain."



Mrs. Jean Knuff examines her stock in trade.