

David Edward Gurley of Southfield has used Stradivari and Guarnieri, master instrument. (Staff photos by Gary Friedman) as his model in creating a fine

Strings for classical tunes

Craftsman revives a dying art

His name will be placed in the soon-to-be-released national Vioin and Guitar Makers Catalogue. underscoring the professionalism of his work.
Gurley also has repaired violins for friends and made another instrument, a dulcimer, which also is of professional quality.

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In addition to music and his crafts-manship. Gurley enjoys travel. In 1971, be traveled to Europe with one of his daughters to see first-hand the works of the masters such as Michael-angelo? Bernini. Rembrandt and others.

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By GWENDOLYN MALECKE

When David Edward Gurley decides to "fiddle away his time" he's not speaking of wasting time but literally creating a fine instrument from the very beginning.

This could mean making his own copy of a Stradivari violin. And while he may have gone about it in a pianissimo manner, the result has been with an outstandingly bravura touch.

an outstandingly ordered a dying craft, as well as almost impos-sible to accomplish, the Southfield craftsman realized that it would first involve some study on the subject. So be set out to learn how the old mas-ters, such as the Stradivari and Guar-nieri families did such excellent work.

Diligently, he put in hours at the library studying books such as Heron Allen's, "As it Was, And Is."

He had actually nursed the idea of making his own violin since taking vio-lin lessons for some 25 years ago, when, as a young man, he studied the instrument and loved it.

also influential was the power of suggestion he received from an old distinction of the power of suggestion he received from an old distinction with the power of European maple and spruce. This particular type of wood is generally the kind used in northern Europe for making line stringed instruments.

GURLEY kept the wood carefully over the years, partly so it would mel-low with age, and partly because fam-ily obligations to his wife. Christine. and four daughters and a son, made it almost impossible to find the time to begin his project. Also, his regular job as an uphol-sterer was also time consuming, even as it added to his skill in working with wood.

After carefully cutting, shaping, fit-ting, sanding, buffing and matching the special wood, his dream slowly materialized. After 10 coats of light varnish was painstakingly applied, the violin's beautifully matched grains of wood showing through in a lovely pat-tern, made it a delight to behold.

Once he played it awhile. Gurley was convinced that it could stand up to any violin, for it also had good tonal quality. He didn't hesitate to have it scrutinized by several experts who examined it and played it as well.

Tops among these experts was Gino D'Alessio, formerly a concert master under Arturo Toscanini with the Rome Symphony on radio for many years.

D'Alessio, now first violinist with the Canadian Windsor Symphony and who also plays for dinner guests at the Michigan Inn in Southfield, played the instrument for him.

Then, he took it to Richard Luby, principal second violinist with the Rochester. New York Philharmonic Orchestra, a former Detroiter who was recently in the area on a concert tour. Luby also praised Gurley's crafsmanship and the violin's tones.

GURLEY, recently, was cited by the Violin and Guilar Makers Association at its Arizona convention. He placed fourth in competition with points for his workmanship, and the finish and tone quality of his instrument.

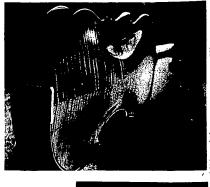
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