



Ann McVee, an optician at Optical I in Birmingham, models three eye glass frames by Neostyle, the most expensive line in the world today. With 3,000 frames to choose from, the price range runs from \$40 to \$2,000. (Staff photo by Tracy Baker)

High fashion eye frames with high fashion names

By LORRAINE McCLISH

Shoppers who stop in at Optical I, armed with a prescription for eye-glasses, will find close to 3,000 frames from which to choose.

The new shop is easy to spot in the Garden Terrace of Birmingham's 355 Woodward Building because the decor is centered around one wall that is literally lined with frames in an unbelievable variety of shapes and colors.

Ed Purcell, vice president of Optical I Inc., believes that he has more frames in inventory than anybody. He certainly is one of a few who has a frame with a \$2,000 price tag hanging from it.

The \$2,000 model is solid gold. Some are studded with real diamonds. From there, the price range slopes downward with high fashion designs



with high fashion names, some copas, and then some moderate prices. PURCELL, a resident of Birmingham came to the area after 10 years of working in the trade, both in retailing and in the technical end of optometry.

He thinks of Optical I, which held its grand opening the first weekend in February, as "the Saks Fifth Avenue

of eyeglass frames" and he thinks of eyeglass frames as pieces of jewelry.

He says he "sells elegance, but the price is competitive." He claims not to advocate "a \$300 frame when you can look very fashionable in something around \$10."

Nonetheless, he has sold as many as seven pairs of different frames to one customer "just for variety and be-

cause some people do think of their glasses as a clothing accessory." He adds, rather wryly, that that one multi-lensed customer was a man.

Purcell works with two optometrists, Ann Smith and Ann McVee, who fill lens prescriptions as well as help clients choose frames and sometimes act as models.

When it was suggested that some shoppers might be overwhelmed given a choice of 3,000 designs, both were quick to say that it can take as long or as short a period of time as a customer wants to give.

But their across-the-board philosophy is that it is foolish to give less than 10 minutes to choosing something you are going to have to live with until the next post card comes in announcing that it is time for your yearly eye examination.

ON THE OTHER hand, if time is a problem, they boast they can deliver a quick narrowing down of choices having to do with everything from price to the size of the bridge of your nose.

Both are adamant that they will be the first to tell you if the Elton John or the grannies are not for you.

But the choices went beyond 3,000 when Ms. McVee began talking about accessories to be added to the basic frame.

There are fashionable color tints to choose from that have no bearing on the therapeutics of the lens.

And there are monograms offered for placement in one corner of a lens.

Or there are miniature figures of birds or butterflies or flowers or fishes or crosses that can be adhered to fancyup a plain frame. Replicas for those who can't afford real diamonds.

"We can make your frame as decorative as you want it to be," Purcell said, "but we are still selling quality as well as excellence in the lens itself."

Customers also walk away from the store with a fashionable, soft eyeglass case.

"If you are thinking about paying up to \$100 for a frame," Purcell said, "I expect you will want to keep it in something more than a paper bag."

Parfait perfect

The person who invented the ice cream parfait deserves a special thanks from every hostess who likes to get some things done ahead of time.

Parfaits are fancy looking desserts you make up hours or days in advance and leave in the freezer till serving time. You can put ice cream and strawberry preserves in layers with whipped cream on top, or crushed pecan brittle in layers with butter pecan ice cream, or creme de menthe with vanilla ice cream or whatever sounds good to you.

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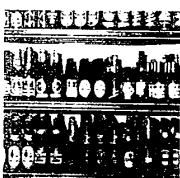
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Where It's At

By JUDY SOLOMON

Beers to you

Here's a refreshing gift idea. Holiday Market specializes in beers from all over the world. Available in both bottles and cans, the beers come from Mexico, Greece, Holland, Germany, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, Ireland, Japan, Canada, Scotland, Sweden, Brazil, Denmark, Australia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, England, Finland, Italy, Austria, Norway, France, South Africa and the Philippines. Holiday Market also makes its own Italian and Polish sausages, has extensive Mexican, Italian and Chinese food departments and carries a wide range of imported cheeses, teas, jams and nutbards. Holiday Market, 1203 S. Main, Royal Oak, 541-1414.



If the shoe fits

Tiny or narrow feet might have been considered aristocratic at one point in time, but nowadays they're a royal pain when you try to find shoes to fit them. The Upstairs Shoe Boo-tek stocks sizes 4½ to 10, including hard-to-find narrow and quads in marvelous up-to-date styles. Some of the shoe designers represented there are Charles Jourdan, Geoffrey Beene, Calvin Klein, Pierre Cardin, David Evans and Amalfi. The shop also carries designer purses by Carlos Falchi and others.

The Upstairs Shoe Boo-tek, 574 N. Woodward, Birmingham, 642-6710.



Three for the show

Jani Hertel, Jan Bagley and Ann Helganz, a truly talented trio, will demonstrate or teach groups numbering six to 40, the way to make decorative spring arrangements utilizing such materials as silk and dried flowers, wheat, moss, dried pods, seeds, pits, burlap, ribbons and decorative ornaments. Their craft workshops vary from one to three sessions, depending on how much you want to do. They provide the necessary materials and request two weeks advance notice. Talented Trio, 647-7923.



Pretty brassy

This good-looking solid brass ashtray complements both traditional and contemporary decor and could double as a dish for candy, nuts, paper clips or whatever else you desire. Made in Spain, it's a reproduction of the corner ashtrays used on card tables in 18th century England. It measures 4¼ by 6¼, is heavy enough not to tip and is priced at \$22. Hampton House, 523 N. Woodward, Birmingham, 645-2433.



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