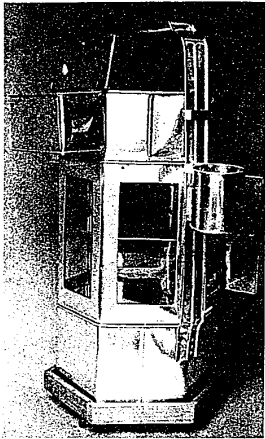


Noodle cart rolls into a new life



Brass, six-sided noodle carts now being brought to this country by a business-minded traveler from Bloomfield Hills serve many purposes in contemporary decor. (Staff photo by Dick Kelley)

A visit in Manila with a friend started Jan Stinson of Bloomfield Hills in a new business. It was the brass noodle cart from Bangkok that did it. Mrs. Stinson spotted the noodle cart in her friend's home and knew immediately it was one of those things she had to have. It was particularly appealing because it was six-sided — the more common ones have but four sides. She found the name of the contact in Bangkok and wrote to him.

"His reply was so nice," said Mrs. Stinson, "that I didn't have the heart to ask him to ship just one, so I ordered four and when they arrived beautifully packed, three of them were sold immediately." She managed to keep the fourth herself but quickly ordered 25 more plus some other smaller items, such as a Thai iron which has an opening for hot coals to heat the iron.

Soon her 25 noodle carts were gone and she re-ordered again and requests for more kept coming. Mrs. Stinson, who has a background in merchandising and a hobby of interior decorating, was in the importing business almost before she had time to reconnoiter.

She was almost as impressed by the way they were packed as the workmanship of the cart itself. They come through surface shipping with nary a blemish or a dent.

They rest on a six-sided wooden stand on casters and Mrs. Stinson sees them fulfilling many uses from pure conversation piece to attractive side tables to hold a plant, a chilled bottle of champagne or an arrangement of flowers. The shelves could nicely showcase a collection of small Oriental items.

In actual use in Thailand, the noodle cart is one half of the noodle vendor's equipment, used to serve fish ball and noodle soup on the city streets.

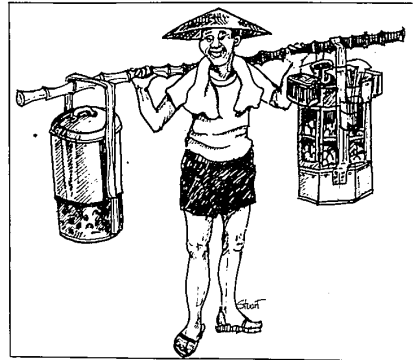
The other half is a large cooking pot and lid

which rests on top of a round, charcoal fired habachi. Pot and habachi have a metal strap, similar to the handle of the noodle stand. The two units, noodle cart and pot-habachi are carried on opposite ends of a bamboo pole balanced on the shoulders of the vendor.

The noodle stand's side containers hold different sauces, sugar and spices for flavoring the soup and coriander leaf to sprinkle on top. Chop sticks are stored in the round cup-shaped container. The fish ball and noodle soup is served hot at curbside. The fish balls are stored on the small fixed shelf just inside the doors and the dry noodles are kept on the larger removable shelf.

Gradually, the noodle cart and pot carried on a pole are making way for modern, mechanized carts peddled about by the noodle vendor.

Those who wish to contact Mrs. Stinson about the noodle carts or other Thai brass items may call 647-6662.



Noodle and fish ball soup vendor in the old days carried his culinary equipment on a long pole and set up shop on the street corner. Mechanization has taken over in recent years.

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