



The miniature ceramic carolers and church is a small part of the collection that makes up an entire village street. The villagers are brought out every year, with new pieces as they can be found, to be placed on the fireplace mantle in the inn's lobby.

Photos by Randy Borst



The doll-sized pottery stove that is the focal point of a scene in Botsford Inn is typical of the types of things in keeping with the inn's colonial decor for which designer Marion Boese is on the lookout

throughout the year. The Christmas scene is placed in a room visitors pass through on their way to the private dining rooms, furnished with pieces that have been there, some since 1836.

A look inside Botsford Inn dressed up for the holidays

By LORRAINE McCLISH

Farmington Hills Beautification Commission suggests residents take a close look this holiday season at a historic Farmington landmark, Botsford Inn, operating since 1836 on Grand River, west of Eight Mile Road. The commissioners recommend a visit to the one-time stagecoach stop in

its program of publicly recognizing properties that enhance the city. The inn was first built as a home, then later converted into a tavern and inn. Milton C. Botsford bought the inn in 1869 and sold it to Henry Ford in the 1920s. Marion Boese has been in charge of decorating the Inn and the court yard gardens for four years now. Her efforts can be seen around the

lobby desk that once served as a bar; on a Swiss music box once owned by Henry Ford; on a desk said to have been used by President Abraham Lincoln and on a host of scones, four-poster beds, beamed dressers and heavily framed mirrors that have withstood nearly 145 years of use.

Planning starts late in the fall to decorate four Christmas trees, as many fireplaces, and an numerous chandeliers and wall sconces. Centerpieces for tables of all sizes also come under her purview, with decorations simple or elaborate to suit the room or occasion.

"EVERY ROOM is decorated differently," Mrs. Boese said, "keeping as close as I can to the colonial theme. A lot of what you see comes from what has been stored away from past years but shopping goes on indefinitely, finding a piece here or there that can be added."

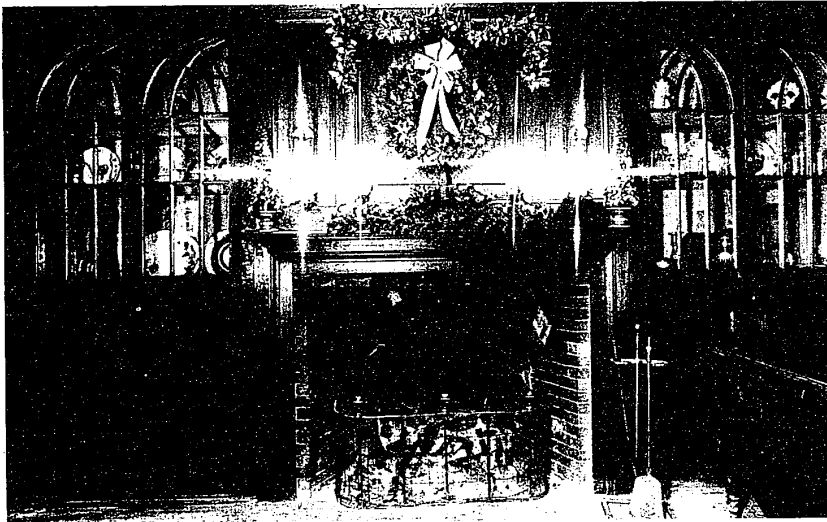
An example of her mid-year shopping that visitors can see this season is in the ceramic collection that makes up a village street scene on the mantle of the fireplace in the lobby.

The display contains about 50 pieces that have been amassed over the years and some are now valued collectors' items.

THE OUTSIDE of the inn also gets special attention this season, particularly the walled, formal garden area where summer receptions are held. The gardens can be seen from the main dining room's picture windows.

Even the old stage coach outside, with leather side curtains, wooden wheels and iron tires, and the wooden cradle in the second floor hall, get treated to ribbons and sprigs of holly for the holidays.

In the coach house, generally reserved for private parties, red ribbon is used profusely to brighten up the dark, somber wooden posts and staid stained glass windows.



Candles sparkle from tin wall scones and Victorian candleholders over the fireplace that once lit the room for farmers and drovers trading sessions. The wood in the room gets its color from corn cobs once

burned in the fireplace. The cupboards that flank the fireplace are left undecorated so guests can view choice pieces of antique china, silver and glass.



The white clapboard Victorian inn on Grand River and Eight Mile Road has changed hands many times over the years but has kept its doors open for over a century. When the original house and 42 acres of

land was bought by Henry Ford, many rare 19th century treasures went into its furnishings and remain today. Botsford Inn is now owned by Anbut Hotels Co. John Anbut is Botsford's innkeeper.

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