

Downsizing luxury is newest trend in housing

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

Fashion school students are learning how design sells products by examining model homes instead of fashion models.

Two dozen students enrolled in a fashion merchandising class at Southfield's Barbizon School took a field trip Monday to Valley Ridge homes in the Ramblewood complex on 14 Mile, west of Drake, Farmington Hills.

The class toured three lavishly decorated model homes on the site while listening to the project's interior decorator, Carl Freiwald of Ann Arbor, a partner in the Perlmutter-Freiwald design firm of Franklin Village.

Most of the discussion centered around the psychology and salesmanship behind every subtle bit of decor a customer encounters in a visit to Valley Ridge.

Nothing is left to chance in an attempt to persuade customers to spend \$185,000 to \$190,000 for a two- or three-bedroom home the developer describes as "downsized," borrowing the carmakers' lingo.

"We're selling luxury housing in a smaller scale," Freiwald tells the class. "In the master bedroom you'll see a little seating area where a couple can snuggle up at night. This is done to make smaller housing palatable."

A price tag just below \$200,000 probably seems high for homes that don't exceed 2,600 square feet. But builder Terry Nosun emphasizes that the target customer at Valley Ridge homes is an older, affluent customer who wants to "move down" into smaller quarters without settling for an attached condominium or sacrificing elegance.

BECAUSE The typical, mythical customer is older than the norm, the homes have been designed and decorated to appeal to a conservative client who wants to be stylish without being way-out.

The homes don't come furnished but the fully decorated models are supposed to suggest what the houses can look like when they are. Trim, tile, woodwork and landscaping are part of the package that are emphasized by the decor.

"A customer is in the house an average of seven to 10 minutes," Freiwald told the class. "In that time we need to make a positive impression. So we can't be as subtle as we might be in a private customer's house."

Describing the model home's neutral-tone living room decor, Freiwald begins to sound more like a psychologist than interior decorator.

USING WORDS like "mellow," "peaceful," and "tranquil," the designer described the thought that went into the living room of the "Antium" model.

He points out the mirror above the entrance sectioned off by wooden beams, telling the students the mirror is bronze-backed to lend a warmer glow to the room. Another bronze-backed mirror is found on the far side of the living room.

"It's not as glib as a silver mirror," Freiwald says. "It makes everyone look like they have a suntan. It's softer, mellower than a regular mirror."

Because the carpet and walls are neutral, there are bronze and brass pieces such as a samovar, table and bowls around the room to add color and balance. To give the room an illusion of spaciousness, wooden beams around the fireplace become part of the ceiling detail.

Nothing is left to chance in order of importance to the customer, Freiwald said designers have learned persons place most emphasis on their living room, value the kitchen second and rank the bathroom even above the master bedroom.

"It's important to make the master bath glamorous," said Freiwald. "Today everyone wants, for some reason, a nice bathroom. They may use the tub only once a year but, by God, they want it."

"ONE CLIENT of mine was an 80-year-old woman and she wanted a Jacuzzi, a shower with eight pulsating shower heads and mirrors on the ceiling. And she could hardly totter around. The idea is you're selling the aura of something people always wanted and never had."

Students and instructors debated the merits of some of the decor found in the homes. In the third model, the Chandon, Freiwald decorated the kitchen in a bold red and white design that included giant red apple wallpaper and a framed Kilian cat poster on the wall.

Fashion merchandising instructor Agnes Robert of West Bloomfield thought "this room makes you want to get up in the morning." While Beverly Gallagher of Birmingham, retail advertising instructor, said the room "offends my equilibrium."

The important thing, said the decorator, is to make an impact that leads to the sale of a house.

The director of fashion merchandising at Barbizon School, Jo-Anne Nosun, also happens to be the wife of the project's builder, Terry Nosun. She said design students should benefit from the field trip even if they don't enter the field of interior decorating.



Students from the Barbizon School listen to interior decorator Carl Freiwald tell them how it's done as they tour the Ramblewood complex, on 14 Mile in Farmington Hills.

Symphony's future threatened by mass board resignations

By Judith Berne
staff writer

The West Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra needs some "angels."

The orchestra was forced to cancel last night's scheduled concert for lack of funds.

Although the majority of musicians would have performed the concert free, refusal by the principals from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra forced cancellation, reported Carolyn Muir, former executive director.

phony board President Myron Bordman and Dr. and Mrs. Robert Niscar resigned from the board Monday when their proposal to permanently shut down the orchestra was refused.

The Muirs founded the orchestra. Mrs. Muir served as the paid executive director and was an orchestra musician. Niscar was board vice president.

"I want the symphony to survive, partly because they (the founders) have worked hard," Harold Patrick said, speaking for the remaining seven board members.

"They wanted us to fold our tent and

close it up. We're going to carry on. It costs a lot of money, takes a lot of people to have a symphony. If we let the people know what our situation is, they will help us out," Patrick said.

THE SYMPHONY, founded in 1975, is short \$1,000-\$2,000, Patrick said, for the same reasons that many charities and non-profit organizations are in trouble — tough economic times.

Mrs. Muir put the deficit at \$5,000, including \$3,000 to the West Bloomfield School District for auditorium fees, but Patrick said the symphony board has

some of that money. "We will pay the school district, we will pay everybody," Patrick promised. "The remaining directors feel strongly — more strongly than those who resigned — we don't want anyone to be hurt."

It is doubtful whether season ticket holders will be reimbursed for concerts not played, but he is hopeful it won't come down to that.

The organization has been hard hit by cutbacks in grants and advertising.

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IF YOU'RE LOOKING for a new challenge, take a drive up to the Farmington Board of Education offices at 32500 Shawwassee and take out some petitions to run for the school board. Offices are open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Administrative assistant Scott Bacon is available to assist candidates with information about filing and campaign finance laws. Petitions must be filed by 4 p.m. April 12 at the board offices. Candidates must acquire names of 20 registered voters on the nominating petitions. Two seats are open. The terms run for four years, from July 1, 1982 to June 30, 1986. To be eligible a person must be a registered and qualified school elector. Property ownership is not a requirement for candidacy.

LOOKING FOR A LEADERSHIP position in higher education, you still have time to file an application and resume to serve on the Oakland Community College Board of Directors. The individual selected will be on the board through June of this year. At that time an election will be held to fill the post for the four years remaining in the term. Applications must be in by March 12. Send them to: Office of the President, 2480 Opdyke Road, Bloomfield Hills 48013. Any qualified elector residing within the Oakland Community College District is eligible. Applicants whose application materials have reached the college by the deadline date are requested to attend the regular college board of trustees meeting March 25 in order to be interviewed. Board meetings take place at the George Bee Administrative Center, 2480 Opdyke Road, Bloomfield Hills. For further information, contact the community relations office, 647-6200.

WHAT IS BOUND to be one of the events of the year in Farmington, the Farmington 8 Lions Club is hosting an 1870 Governor's Ball at the Fred Warner Mansion which now serves as the area's historical museum. Among the activities will be a reception and tour of the mansion, a champagne banquet on the lawn and a costume ball at the old town hall, now the Masonic Temple. Cost is \$100 per person. Proceeds will go to the museum trust fund refurbishing program. The ball is slated for May 22. For further information call 525-4672 or 476-3697.

HARD AS IT IS TO BELIEVE summer really isn't that far off. So now is the time to bone up on those swimming skills. The Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department is willing to help out in that effort. They will be conducting adult swimming lessons from March 22 to May 3 on Monday evenings at North Farmington High School. Costing \$12, the classes will be from 8:15

p.m. to 9:15 p.m. Those interested must register in advance at the parks and recreation offices, 31555 11 Mile, corner of Orchard Lake Road. For more information, call the Parks and Recreation offices at 474-6115.

AT EASE. The following persons have been nominated to one of the military academies by U.S. Rep. William Brodhead. Stephen Bindon of North Farmington High School has been nominated to Naval and Air Force academies as well as to the United States Merchant Marine Academy. Karl Gottschalk, a Catholic Central grad, has been nominated to the Naval and Air Force academies. Janice Higuera, a North Farmington grad, has been nominated to the United States Military Academy. David Tellner, also a North Farmington grad, has been nominated to the Military Academy and the Merchant Marine Academy. Kurt Bonatz has been nominated to the Naval Academy. He is a Catholic Central grad. Detroit Country Day graduate Michael Reilly, has been nominated to the Naval Academy.

HATS OFF TO DR. Sam Scheinfeld DO, who has been elected president of the professional staff at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills. He is a 1966 graduate of the University of Michigan where he earned a triple major in psychology, art and chemistry. He graduated from the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1971 and interned at Botsford in 1971-72. Other officers elected were Dr. Max McKinney, president-elect; Richard Knight, vice president; Charles Tanner, secretary; and Louis Spagnuolo, treasurer. They will serve until January 1983.

ANOTHER CONGRATULATION goes to Glenn Trevisan of Farmington Hills, who has been named executive director of the Children's Leukemia Foundation. He formerly was the associate director. Trevisan already has made his mark with the Children's Leukemia Foundation as serving with the United Foundation Speaker's Bureau. He also is a member of the Public Relations Society of America.

IF YOU'RE HAVING trouble finding time to read everything you need for job or pleasure, the William Tyndale College is offering its facility for a speed reading course. On three successive Tuesday evenings, March 23, 30 and April 6, a special six-hour rapid reading course, from 7:30-9:30 p.m. each night will be conducted at the college, 35700 12 Mile, Farmington Hills. Cost is \$49. For further information call 553-7208.

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