

Etching careers in glass with class

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While manufacturing mirrored tables for local clients, Tim had worked with top interior designers in the Detroit area, but when he came up with the relatively new idea of creating murals, doorlights, windowlights, and room dividers in etched glass, many of the designers were not familiar at all with the concept, he said.

"But, as they became more aware of the idea through interior design magazines and by seeing it applied in other cities, it slowly began to take hold."

The first etched-glass work executed by T. Gill was commissioned by the Excalibur bar and restaurant in Southfield in 1982

— a room divider featuring an abstract design suggestive of reeds and water, which separates the bar area from the dining crowd.

SINCE THEN, the Gillingshams, who work through referrals, have designed and put together hundreds of panels of the decorated glass and, in recent times, have seen profits rise steadily at a rate of about 10-15 percent per year, says Tim.

The couple's widespread clientele include restaurants in Florida and Chicago, apartment complexes in Atlanta, and private residences in Toronto, Indianapolis, and New York. Locally, in addition to the Excalibur, T. Gill

has put together glass creations for nightclubs like Taboo in Detroit, and wall murals at the Federal Savings Building at 12 Mile Rd. and Northwestern.

They've also completed projects at a large number of homes in the area, including the Grosser residence of businessman Heinz Prechter, and at the homes of musician, Earl Klugh, and TV/radio personality Sonya Friedman.

"People in the Detroit area, compared to some other places, actually prefer rather sophisticated design," said Tim. "In Florida, for instance, people always want something with that Florida 'feel' to it — birds and cranes and banana leaves, stuff like that."

Here, people go for a kind of contemporary abstract style. Originally, it was very hard-line contemporary; recently, it seems to have become a bit 'softer.'"

ON AN INFORMAL tour of his workshop (located, since 1982, in a converted barn on Haggerty Rd. near 12 Mile) Tim pauses to show a visitor a new design idea he's recently worked on.

"We're developing overlays that will be carved (through sandblasting) out of glass, and glued to another glass surface. It's a new application and it takes time, but it's starting to catch on." (A stylized rose about 6 inches in diameter takes about 4 hours to "carve," he said.)

Just off the workshop is the special, tightly-constructed room, its floor almost ankle-deep in silica sand, where the designs are sandblasted into the glass.

"Sandblasting, of course, is definitely a health hazard," said Christine. "When you're operating at such high pressure, the sand is constantly bouncing back at you and filling the air. We have exhaust fans in the blast room, and when we're working, we use a respirator, an air-feed helmet that keeps fresh air inside the helmet — and we always wear gloves."

WITH SO MANY orders coming in and so much to do, why not hire help at T. Gill?

"That's really how we keep our quality up and our breakage down — by doing all the work ourselves," said Christine.

"At one time, we had seven or eight guys working for us, and several trucks on the road," said Tim. "It seemed great — you had all these people and all these trucks on the road. But it just got to be a real hassle because it was so hard training these people to do the job to our specifications. Now, we've cut back to what we can personally control."

"In the business, Christine does the designing and etching. My department is primarily sales, installation, construction, and coordinating projects. And I also do a lot of the etching."

briefly speaking

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Bryant is a shop teacher at Westland John Glenn High School, and is responsible for creating the gazebo and school desks at Mill Race Village. He is a noted antiques collector and frequent speaker on the subject for the historical society.

○ FARMINGTON ARTIST'S SHOW

The annual spring exhibit of fine art by the Farmington Artists Club continues this weekend in Mercy Center, 28800 Eleven Mile Road, Farmington Hills. The public is invited to view and enjoy the artwork and also purchase many of the pieces. There is no admission charge.

○ LCL INVITATIONAL

Budget problems last year forced the Livonia Cultural League to forego its annual purchase award invitational art show, but the event will definitely be held this year.

Under the chairmanship of Lucille McNamara, the show will be on exhibit in the Livonia City Hall from Monday, April 27 through Friday, May 15. Open to the public, the exhibit will feature the works of 75 Michigan artists. Traditionally, the LCL purchases the work of the first place winner. The art work then becomes part of a public collection permanently on display in the city's Fifth Floor Gallery and in offices in the City Hall.

Awards will be presented at a champagne reception preceding the opening of the art show.

○ WSU CHOR

The Wayne University Choral Union and Orchestra, under the direction of Dennis J. Tini, will present a spring concert at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, April 26, in St. Genevieve Catholic Church, 29015 Jamison, Livonia. General admission is \$5 with a \$3 rate for children and seniors.

The choral union and orchestra will perform the following selections: Schubert's "Magnificat" and Vincent Persichetti's "Gloria" from "Mass for Mixed Voices" Singers from St. Genevieve and St. Raymond Church, Detroit, will join the WSU group for Verdi's "Te Deum."

arts/crafts fair

○ MOTHER'S DAY ART SHOW

A Mother's Day art show will ring down the curtain for Craft Gallery's offerings until fall. The show will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, May 3, in Roma's of Garden City, 32550 Cherry Hill Road, between Merriman and Venoy roads.

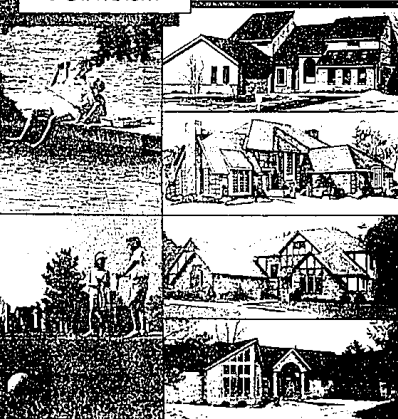
Approximately 70 exhibitors will participate in the show which will focus on country designs, early American accent items and antique reproductions. There is ample parking and food service is available. Admission is \$1.50.

○ FARMINGTON CENTER

The Farmington Community Center will be having a spring arts and crafts show from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 9. Admission is \$1 for adults. Over 55 artisans and craftspeople will be presenting their work on the lovely grounds of the Farmington Community Center and throughout the elegant Georgian mansion. Many original items will be available for purchase.

There will be a free shuttle bus from the 10 Mile School parking lot. The center is located at 24705 Farmington Road, just north of 10 Miles Road. For more information, call 477-8404.

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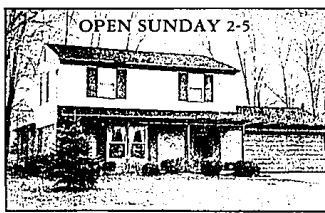
STEVE LEIBHAN
Vice President—Sales Manager
Lathrup Village Office

Steve Leibhan, Vice President - Sales Manager of Chamberlain, REALTORS Lathrup Village Office is a firm believer in the educational advancement involved in real estate. Steve, a graduate of Michigan State University with Graduate Studies from the University of Michigan, was a teacher within the Livonia Public School System before entering real estate. He also has received his Graduate REALTORS Institute Designation, and Certified Real Estate Brokerage Manager Designation.

Steve, wife Janice, and sons Benjamin - age 8, Evan - age 5, live in the Farmington Hills area.

If you are ready for a change in your present sales position or a new career, Chamberlain REALTORS cordially invites you to visit with Steve

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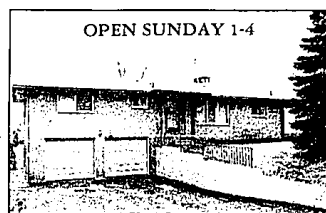
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