



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Mary Fusco won the prize for best built structure with her confectionary concept of the house where Santa Claus lives.



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It's hard to walk by and not touch. Novi Hilton chef Dave Wilson assembled all of the individual pieces together for the gingerbread village. He also does the maintenance work.

Gingerbread village good enough to eat

The gingerbread village in the lobby of the Novi Hilton was constructed by Dave Wilson, the hotel chef, and some of his staff who competed in a contest of creativity.

The first prize in the contest for the best building in the village was a weekend stay in the Hilton. Wilson's personal prize was the completed confectionery village that will remain on display until Jan. 1.

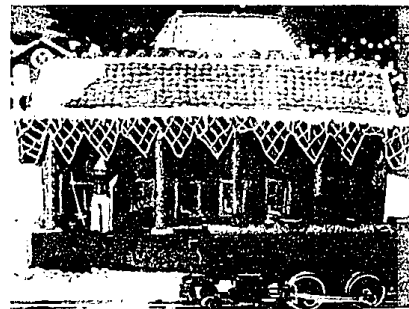
First-place winner was pantry cook Mary Fusco, who spent three and a half days building Santa Claus' house.

Wilson said that each design took some 20-60 hours to complete. He knows more than 100 pounds of sugar were used, in addition to another \$1,500 for ingredients and accessories.

FOCAL POINT of the village is the Novi train station and the miniature train that runs through the village.

The village church was made from 800 sugar cubes. Pulled sugar was used to make its stained glass windows.

The village also has a chalet, a toy shop with teddy bears, a gingerbread reindeer, a mansion; its own lamp-posts, granola-paved streets and ice cream cone trees glazed with icing. The Novi Hilton is at I-275 and Eight Mile.



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The train stops at Novi Junction.



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The W stands for Wilson. Chef Dave Wilson calls his contribution to the village "The Mansion on the Hill."

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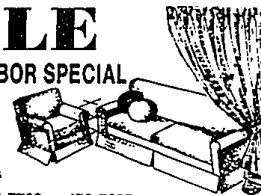
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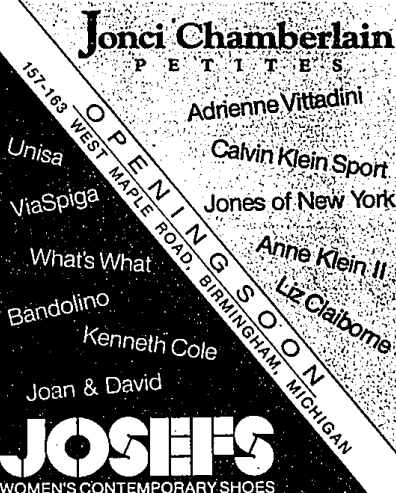
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