



designing ways

Eve Garvin

California discoveries

I SPENT the last two weeks in California. One week in San Francisco, the other in Los Angeles. We stayed in Bel Air, a suburb of Los Angeles. Bel Air is considered to be one of the posh areas. I loved to walk at night and peek into the windows. Plantation shutters, curtains and draperies seem to be the popular cover for windows. I saw very little in vertical blinds. Mini-blinds and draperies were used together.

I spent one day covering the Pacific Design Center in Los Angeles. The original building is about 10 years old. They are completing an addition. Many of the showrooms are open in the new building. I felt very much at home when I spotted Sherrill Upholstery. Their showroom has the elegance of the one we have here at the Michigan Design Center.

I was very impressed with a line of occasional chairs that are imported from Spain and Italy. The company name is Italmond. The chair frames are made of solid beechwood, handcarved and available in a number of finishes. Their finishes are in grades just as fabrics are from manufacturers of furniture.

I WAS SO IMPRESSED that I asked if they had a representative in this area. They do not, but they have a catalog that is available to interior designers. If you are working with a designer, I suggest you ask that person to write this company. I found the prices very moderate considering the fine quality of the construction and finish.

Signatures in Acrylic has a spiral staircase in its showroom on the main floor of the Blue building in the same center. The entire staircase is acrylic — even the tread, which has a stainless steel cover leaving three to four inches of acrylic on either side exposed. Their work is spectacular. This is all custom work. Send them your specifications and they will not only send you the finished product, but the installer to do the job. Needless to say, it's very costly, but if your budget allows it, what a look!

Eve Garvin has been an interior designer in the area for many years. She welcomes comments and questions from readers. Send those to her in care of this newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150.

By C.L. Rugenstein
special writer

Sybaris, that pleasure loving city in ancient Greece, gave us the word "sybarite" to describe those who love to surround themselves with luxury. Sybaris Gallery in Huntington Woods, a new showcase for works of craft art, was begun with a similar idea.

"To surround yourself with art is luxury," explained Linda Ross, partner with Arlene Selik in the new venture.

But the artwork Sybaris Gallery brings to the area is not in the usual vein — paintings or sculpture, or "cutesy" gift — type offerings. The works displayed at Sybaris, the Gallery are part of a new wave called craft art — traditional handicraft pieces like bowls and urns, baskets and furniture that have transcended the functional to become fine art in their own right.

THE DEBATE ABOUT whether craft art is fine art still rages, however, with price being one determining factor.

"When you can demand \$25,000 for a piece (as controversial ceramist Robert Arneson, father of 'funk' art can) it's no longer second class — it's fine art," said Ross. "Craft art has become a major force in the art world."

While Sybaris doesn't have any

Arneson works at present, they do have several handsome pieces by an artist influenced by Arneson, Rimas Visgirda.

The line drawings on Visgirda's clay vessels brings Picasso to mind. The tall, cylindrical face entitled "A Boy and His Dog" is simply drawn, colorful, and engaging. On top of the hat is the dog in bronze miniature, his shadow painted on the hat. It shows Visgirda's irreverence toward his medium as well as a lighter side of 'serious' art.

VISGIRDA IN HIS person and works illustrates also the blurring of two other distinctives between fine arts and craft art. Craft art utilizes the media of clay, glass, wood and metal. Oil-on-canvas, and marble/bronze sculpture were the traditional media of fine art. Visgirda is also university trained, (with a master of fine arts degree) as are a great many artists who chose to express themselves through craft art forms and media.

Mike Chipperfield is another artist represented at Sybaris. His works show a fascination with texture: a fragile-looking small bowl was done in a Japanese method called Rakel. "It's taken from the kiln while red hot and put into combustible material (like sawdust), which burns to create a black smoke to burnish the pot and make it very porous," Selik explained.

Craft artists are experimenting with their media, she added. "They're pushing the boundaries of their particular media to see how far they can go — creating works very much out of the mainstream."

Like Yvonne Porcella. One wouldn't ordinarily rank quilts as fine art, but Porcella creates modernistic fabric paintings with narrative themes. Scenes in brilliant red, yellow, and black/white checks reminiscent of Purina critter chow bags adorn viewers to "Share the Milk-bones of Life." Another quilt-tapestry in yellow, green, purple and the black/white checks muses profoundly, "It's About Beets and Perfume."

BUT WHILE VISGIRDA'S and Chipperfield's works are some of the many consignment pieces available at Sybaris, Porcella's can only be viewed on film, presently. One of the services Selik and Ross offer clients is the option of viewing the work of the artists they represent via a slide show.

"Usually the gallery is open by ap-

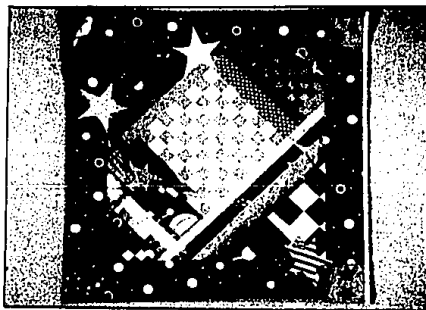
pointment only, but we try to be flexible," Selik said. "The client can come here, or we can go to them: have slides, will travel!" she laughed.

The reason for the limited gallery hours is the fact that it's located in Ross's home.

Would-be Sybarites will have a chance to see how well they've succeeded when they open the gallery for their first exhibit, titled "A Celebration of American Crafts: An Exhibit of Art in the Media of Clay, Wood, Fiber, Glass and Metal." The exhibit will run from Sept. 24 through Oct. 18, and Hope Palmer of the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association will be the featured speaker. An opening reception will be held from 1-5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 24.

THIS CITY IS SO culturally rich we felt it should have its own gallery," Ross said.

For more information about Sybaris Gallery's hours, or the upcoming exhibit, call 542-8902 or 544-9552.



Artist Yvonne Porcella created this quilt, "Chili Pepper Lites," of cotton with hand-painted border fabric. It is machine-quilted, hand appliqued and hand-quilted. It measures 36-by-36 inches.

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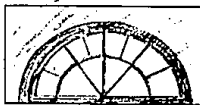
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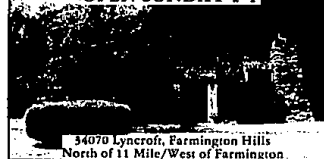


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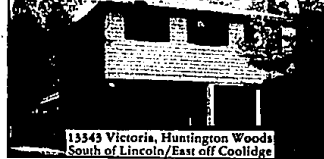
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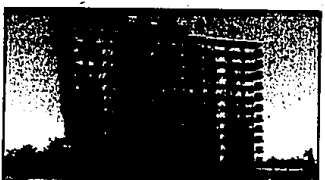


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