

all about color

Helen Diane Vincent

Recast old colors for lively new variations

Q. My husband and I do not agree on the color scheme for our new retirement home in northern Michigan. We've always lived with dark greens, golds and browns. I'm looking for a change, but he is not. Later, I find myself attracted to pinks and would like to use them in our new home. How should we work this out?

A. It appears your husband is looking for continuity in a disruptive situation, no matter how happy it looks from the outside. You, on the other hand, seem to be seeking some kind of protection and expressing a need for a show of appreciation by your gravitating toward pinks.

My recommendation is to recast your old colors into brightened and lightened variations. Substitute a pale and brighter yellow for the old gold; shift into the clearer indigo for blue greens for the dark greens, and translate the brown into lighter tan and the use of lighter wood tones. These variations on the old color harmony will now allow you to introduce a medium, warm-cast pink, perhaps, as an accent in the living room, or as a key color in the bedroom, with soft greens as secondary colors.

Q. Our old brick house has many additions constructed of different materials. It's the only traditional house, with porch and shutters in a neighborhood of split-level homes. We want to do some painting and renovation. What colors do you suggest?

A. Pull together the different textures and materials by painting the house in a soft, fairly flat, cool gray. Paint all of the trim in white and the shutters in black. If you are considering substituting the porch with a deck with rails, use the light, natural looking wood. You could even introduce grey through light-colored gravel in the landscaping.

Light grays are appropriate to traditional homes, yet harmonize with contemporary. And because gray is unobtrusive, it makes a nice neighborly statement.

Esper awarded dance scholarship

Michelle Esper of Farmington Hills is one of four recipients of scholarships awarded to the Festival of Dance at Marygrove College.

Featured at this summer's festival

is Robert Garland, soloist with the Dance Theatre of Harlem, teaching week-long workshops in ballet, pointe, modern and jazz.

Q. My boyfriend likes me the way I am, but my girlfriends keep telling me I should try for a new brighter look. I'm interested but also afraid of making a change. I'm 20 years old, weigh 130 pounds, have dark, wavy blonde hair, hazel eyes, and peach skin that tans easily. I like a lot of different colors, except I really hate brown. I see a lot of bright pinks and purples — sometimes shown with orange — in the stores and wonder they're something I could wear.

A. First of all, it's more than likely that your boyfriend accepts your appearance because the underlying relationship is satisfactory, and not the other way around. You should make a change if you feel it's necessary. Ask yourself if your wardrobe looks dated. Are you being overlooked for promotions in your job for unattractive reasons? Your image could be getting out of phase with your inner self and your career, and that may be why your girlfriends are telling you to change.

If you are fairly content, don't try to project an overly aggressive image, it won't fool anyone. Once you have decided that you want to convey, work in harmony with your coloring. This means staying within a middle, fairly blended range of colors because your coloration seems to be quite muted, in that way it doesn't have contrast.

Ash blondes should usually stay away from orange and the green-yellow. However, the pinks and purples, as long as they are not too bright, could be a good addition to your wardrobe. Ditching brown usually means you reject restraint but may be suffering from some guilt feelings.

All About Color appears every other week in the Creative Living section of the Observer & Escapist Newspapers. Columnist Helen Vincent welcomes comments and questions from readers. Send those to her in care of this newspaper, 30231 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150.

Book focuses on tempestuous Dodges

VETERAN writer Jean Pitrone marked the publication of her eighth book last week at a reception-lunch at Meadow Brook Hall. The publication of "Tangled Web: Legend of Auto Pioneer, John F. Dodge" coincided with the 75th anniversary of the manufacture of the first Dodge automobile.

Though story after story has been published about the Ford family, relatively little has been written about the tempestuous Dodge brothers, two ambitious machinists who came here from Niles, Mich. in the early part of the century, and began to make their mark soon after, working closely with Henry Ford I.

When Pitrone began entertaining the idea of putting together a Dodge biography 18 years ago, she dropped in at the Main Branch of the Detroit Public Library one day, and found more than 60 books centering around Ford and his family, but not a single one on his early partners, John and Horace Dodge.

That, for Jean Pitrone, was "sufficient reason" to start work to fill the gap then and there.

IN 1981, THE Trenton writer co-authored (with Joan Elward) the first Dodge biography, "The Dodges: the Auto Family Fortune and Misfortune."

She chose to go on to write "Tangled Web," she said, because "the story couldn't be contained in one book."


When working on the Dodge books she was granted access to the family's archives. But one of her most important sources of information turned out to be Amelia Hannah Cline, the younger sister of Mrs. John Dodge, who Pitrone talked with regularly over a period of about 10 years.

Blissed with a vivid memory, an ability to express herself well, and having personally amassed a great deal of Dodge memorabilia, Cline (who died in 1981 at the age of 95) seemed more than happy to finally share her stories with someone, Pitrone said. As an experienced biographer and researcher, Pitrone — though greatly appreciative of Cline's accessibility — was not particularly surprised by it.

"People are often eager to talk or to help out," she said. "Sometimes, it's strangely simple to gain access to information."

"TANGLED WEB" BEGINS, shortly after the turn of the century, with the city of Detroit at the threshold of remarkable growth, and the hard-driving John F. Dodge in love with his fiery-tempered secretary and future wife, Matilda Rauch, daughter of a Detroit waterfront saloon keeper.

The book includes intriguing bits of automotive history, highlights early Dodge-Ford business relationships, and also points up a number of odd, similarities and parallels be-



book break

Victoria Diaz

'People are often eager to talk or to help out. Sometimes, it's strangely simple to gain access to information.'

— Jean Pitrone author

tween the Ford and Dodge families through the years.

Its main focus, however, is the legacy of the elder Dodge brother why, before his death at 55 of influenza in 1920, had amassed a fabulous fortune which, in turn, would seem to offer him great misfortune to his survivors and descendants.

Much of "Tangled Web" takes a close look at the mysterious claims of Frances Meacham, a Dearborn woman who had been adopted as an infant, and who came forward in court in 1984, saying she believed herself to be a Siamese twin daughter of John and Matilda Dodge. (The twins had allegedly been separated shortly after birth, Pitrone said, and the other twin had later died, though

she lived to adulthood.) Pitrone interviewed Meacham, her family, and attorneys numerous times in preparation for the book, but takes no stand on the validity of the claim, leaving readers to form their own conclusions. The case is still before the Michigan Court of Appeals, its outcome hinging mainly on whether the woman's sealed adoption papers will ever be opened.

Regular viewers of NBC-TV's "Unsolved Mysteries" may remember Jean Pitrone's appearance on the first show in that series back in 1987, in which she talked about the bizarre case.

Victoria Diaz is an area free lance writer/teacher who lives in Livonia.

Artrain exhibit 'toys' with memories

An annual array of delightful displays will highlight the Artrain exhibit which is scheduled for July 1-4 at Dearborn's North Commerce Park. The event will be open to the public from noon to 5 p.m. daily. Admission is free of charge although small donations are appreciated.

Artrain, the nation's only traveling museum on a train, is comprised of three gallery cars of a wide variety of antique and classic toys including model trains, historic board games, whimsical mechanical banks, beautifully crafted china dolls and a timepiece of well-loved teddy bears. The exhibition, "Treasures of Childhood: 150 Years of American Toys," presents over 300 of the finest objects from the Lawrence Scripps Wilkinson Collection, one of the most distinguished toy collections in the nation.

A VISIT to Artrain will evoke the look and feel of childhood in the distant and recent past. In addition to providing a nostalgic view of toy and playthings, the exhibition will help

the audience explore the lessons that toys teach and the social values that they transmit.

Upon entering Artrain, visitors will view an audio visual presentation introducing the "Treasures of Childhood" and featuring historic photographs of children at play. The first gallery features early childhood toys, including blocks, Mickey Mouse and Mother Goose toys.

Several displays compare ancient, antique and modern toys, dolls, dice and tops from the Fourth Century A.D., borrowed from the University of Michigan's Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, rest alongside remarkable similar toys made as recently as 1982.

Through reading labels to a magical window filled with teddy bears, visitors will see how the bear was "invented" and discover how today's versions of bears are similar to those of their parents. Recreated toy shop windows from 1895, 1920, 1945 and 1960 display dolls, trains, games, and other toys of each era.

IN THE SECOND gallery car, visitors will find a variety of toys, many with accompanying hands-on displays. Rows of cartoon character toys, from early figures like Buster Brown to ageless heroes like Dick Tracy, recreate the Sunday funny pages on the walls of the gallery.

The history of board games from the Victorian period to contemporary times will intrigue viewers of all ages. Visitors will be able to try their skill at three different games from the 19th century. Hands-on mechanical banks and videotapes of mechanical toys in motion will allow visitors to experience how these fascinating objects.

Gallery Three provides a panorama of transportation toys, including boats, trains, horse-drawn carriages, automobiles, airplanes, and spacecraft, all in specially "landscaped" displays. The third gallery ends at the Museum Shop where a variety of toys, including ones handcrafted by Michigan artists, are offered for sale. After touring the galleries, vis-

itors will see toymakers and artists at work in Artrain's demonstration car.

Lawrence Scripps Wilkinson is a former buyer and vice president of F.A.O. Schwarz, New York's famous toy store. His collection of over 5,000 toys represent American life over the last century and a half, from horse-and-buggy days through moon landings and space travel. Portions of the Wilkinson Collection have been exhibited in the United States, Europe and Asia.

London's Victoria and Albert Museum described the exhibition as "the most important and comprehensive collection of American Toys ever assembled for exhibition in this country."

Artrain has traveled to 38 states and has welcomed aboard nearly two million visitors since it began touring 18 years ago. Artrain is sponsored in part by the Michigan Council for the Arts, the Institute for Museum Services, and the Michigan Council for the Humanities.

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