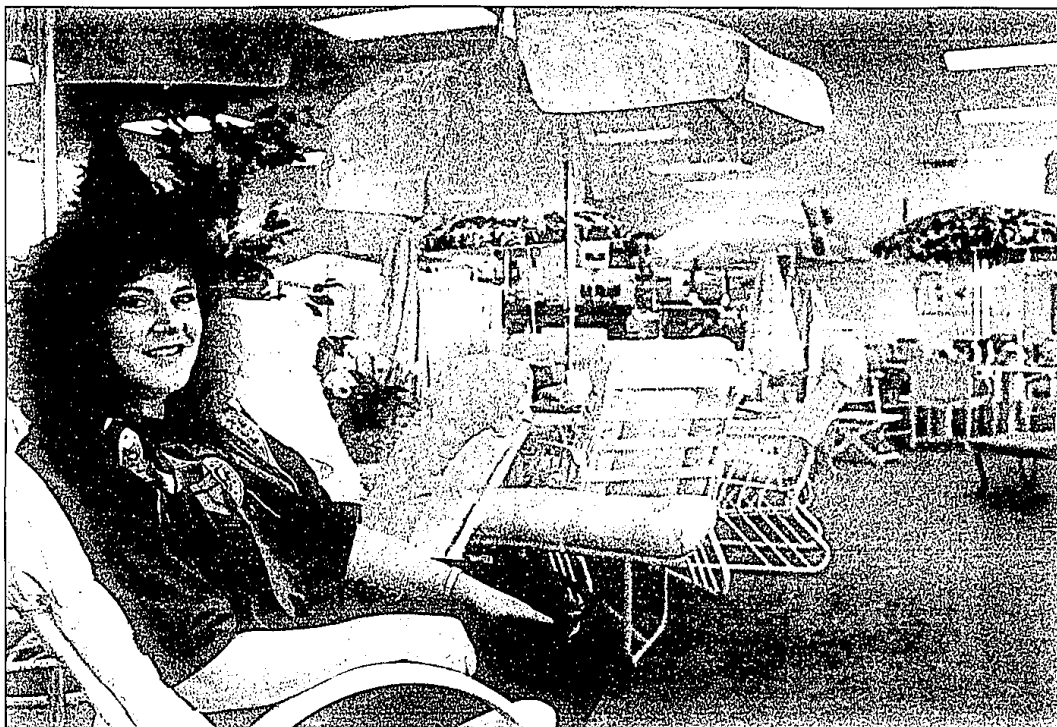




RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Jane Fedrigo of Livonia went to Florida to find furnishings for her 1,000-square-foot back yard deck in Livonia and ended up the owner of two patio furniture stores, named after Palm Beach, Fla.

Palm Beach: Closer than you think

By Darrell Clem
staff writer

You don't find many black plastic Christmas trees in a patio furniture shop.

Come to think of it, you don't find many black plastic Christmas trees anywhere.

But in a patio store? Especially, one that takes its name after Palm Beach, Fla.?

The idea might seem strange at first — but not after talking with store owner Jane Fedrigo. Then it starts to make good business sense.

"It's kind of hard to sell patio furniture in the winter," said Fedrigo, the 30-year-old Livonia resident who owns Palm Beach Patio Furniture stores in Waterford Township and Novi.

And anyway, this fast-talking, quick-witted entrepreneur who laughs often and smokes cigarettes can hardly be described as traditional.

"She cares more about her back yard than she does about the inside of her house," said Fedrigo's mother, Gwen.

Perhaps that's why Fedrigo started her patio business 5½ years ago after a shopping spree in Florida. She went south to find furnishings for her 1,000-square-foot back yard deck in Livonia because she didn't see what she wanted in the Detroit area. She ended up having 40 sets of patio furniture — a truckload — shipped north. "I was just looking."

FEDRIGO, WHO had quit college because she didn't believe she was getting her money's worth, didn't even have a home for her patio inventory. Never mind that she had no retail experience. Or loyal customers. Or even a cash register.

Those details would be worked out. However, even her family questioned her decision, at age 24, to start a patio business.

"But nobody talks Jane out of what she believes in," her mother said. "She had definite ideas, and she would not be discouraged. She has a lot of drive."

Nine of 10 businesses fail in the first five years. Fedrigo observes with a twist of wry humor that after

5½ years in business, "the odds are now only 50 percent that I'll fail."

She must be doing something right though. She has kept a Waterford Township office and last March opened her second store — the one at Novi Town Center. She wants more stores.

Even so, there was a time when Fedrigo wanted nothing more than to own a restaurant, although she concedes that her first love — cooking — is seldom practiced. But she did once beat 25 competitors in a state chili cooking contest. And she jokes — or does she — that she might one day open a restaurant.

"I'm halfway to the restaurant business now. People will come in the store, sit down on the patio furniture and get comfortable. Now all I need is a little kitchen in the back room and I can start serving food."

ALTHOUGH SHE sometimes works 60 hours a week, Fedrigo travels to places such as San Francisco, Dallas, Atlanta, Chicago and New York to keep abreast of the latest styles of patio furniture. The furniture she buys has been shipped

from as far away as Costa Rica.

Next summer, the most popular colors for patio furniture will be black, dark green and white, she said, while yellow is expected to decline in popularity. One of the top styles will be large, awning-type stripes.

Palm Beach Patio Furniture carries such brands as Brown Jordan, Allibert, Samsonite and Tropitone. The patio sets vary from wrought iron to wood to steel to polyvinyl chloride. The stores offer wall art, table settings and —, of course — Christmas trees.

Fedrigo stocks such a variety because she believes her store is like a doughnut shop, "and who wants to walk out of a doughnut shop with a dozen of the same doughnuts?"

Many people buy patio furniture on the spur of the moment for graduation parties or family reunions, Fedrigo said. When the patio business slows in the fall, Fedrigo turns to the Christmas season.

She decorates 20 trees at her Novi store and 30 at the Waterford Township outlet. White lights and silver tinsel look especially good on the

black plastic trees, she said. She chooses a wheat — yes, wheat — tree decorated with aqua, pink and purple lights for her home.

"I REALLY GO for the avant-garde. These trees are just so contemporary."

Fedrigo, the fourth of five children, said she probably will settle down someday and have a family of her own. In fact, she alludes to a marriage but won't say when it might occur.

But she'll never be domesticated, she said, because she plans to stay in the patio business.

"I love patio. I will probably never get out of it."

She will, however, have to consider expanding the 200-square-foot patio built onto the Farmington Hills house to which she plans to move soon. The patio is one-fifth the size of her current patio.

"That's OK," Fedrigo said, puffing on a Carlton. "My new place is on a corner lot. I've got plenty of room to expand the deck. And I'll need it. I've got a lot of patio furniture."



DILL HANSEN

You can find quartz crystals, said to emanate healing energies, light green chrysocolla, associated with creative and emotional balance, dark "mummy beads" made from clay found around the Pyramids, tourmaline, reputed to rid the wearer of negative conditions, and citrine, which is supposed to raise self-esteem, at the Michigan Metaphysical Society Bookstore in Berkley.

When a stone isn't just a stone

Continued from Page 1

"I think people in general are doing more research about a particular stone before they make a purchase. The stones have taken on a whole new meaning for a lot of people."

The Gemstone Remedy Chart suggests wearing or having in your daily possession the following stones:

- For accidents — Carnelian, malachite or amethyst.
- For aches and pains — Rose quartz, citrine or clear quartz.
- For addictions — Sodalite, green tourmaline or amethyst.
- For allergies — Blue lace agate, citrine or chrysocolla.
- For anemia — Garnet, aquamarine or bloodstone.
- For anorexia nervosa — Rose quartz, citrine or aquamarine.
- For anxiety — Dark green tourmaline.
- For arthritis — Azurite/malachite or gold.
- For lower back discomforts — Sodalite, malachite or green tourmaline.
- For middle back discomforts — Bloodstone, amethyst or smoky quartz.
- For upper back discomforts — Rose quartz, amethyst or bloodstone.

In a quaint jewelry shop in Farmington Hills, fossil jewelry is all the rage.

"What we've done is taken fossils and made wearable jewelry out of them," said Anita Collins, co-owner of Your Jeweler's Bench. "People

'A few years ago, young girls would come in here and ask for an attractive pair of earrings they could buy. Today, they come in and specifically ask for a colored stone. I think people in general are doing more research about a particular stone before they make a purchase.'

— Elaine Lewis
Michigan Metaphysical Society

love it because they're unique and they don't see themselves coming and going like they do with other jewelry."

Your Jeweler's Bench has fossil jewelry ranging from necklaces made from cephalopods, shells permeated by iron pyrite to Egyptian scarab pendants, which meant good luck in those days. The petrified sand dollar neck pieces are sure to start conversations.

COLLINS ALSO has some antique jewelry with its own history. For example, there's a Bloody Bucket ring. Made of sterling silver, it dates from World War II.

"It belonged to one of the soldiers from the British brigade in Eng-

land; they called themselves the Bloody Buckets. It was like their signet ring."

Other items include jewelry made from human hair — real collector's pieces, according to Collins — and genuine elk's teeth pins.

"People are generally fascinated with these items. And because they have a story behind them, that makes them all the more interesting."

Fossils range in price from \$150-\$2,500. Mounted prices begin at \$22 for a gold-filled trilobite pendant.

In Southfield, where busy streets and strip malls abound, there is one shop where peace and tranquility still reign.

Presence II on the lower level of the Claymore apartment complex

off of Franklin Road in Southfield can be described in one word — romance.

Jewelry with hidden meaning has "been around for centuries," artist/shop owner Leslie Pilling said.

Pilling's store, which opened last June, carries everything from lavish picture frames adorned in lace to home interior accessories to "jewelry with deep meaning."

"I've done a lot of research on this topic. It appears that the Egyptians and Mayans were the first to use different shapes, designs and colors to give something a particular meaning."

IN ANCIENT Egyptian hieroglyphics certain animals had certain meanings behind them. The fish meant good luck, the bird freedom, the elephant's trunk good luck, the heart love and the bear power, Pilling said.

Pilling has several pieces of jewelry that carry those signs. There is also a pair of earrings that has been made to look like grapes and vines.

"I asked the artist what the significance was. She told me that they should be worn by someone who wants to have a baby because they represent fertility."

Other earrings have astrological signs engraved on them, and there are necklaces adorned with charms that have their own meanings.

"Over the past few years, people have really gotten into this hidden-meaning stuff. Personally, I think the more unusual and eerie something is the more people want it."