

Vignettes of who's exhibiting what

Home

Business is booming at McCoy Inc., Livonia. The company has been experiencing a 20-percent annual growth in sales and much of the business increase is due to the popularity of its saunas.

"More and more people are making staying healthy a part of their lifestyle, but quite a few of them are getting a little tired of the 'health-club' scene so they're turning to bringing some of the health-club home by installing a sauna," said Russell Elvy, sauna division manager.

McCoy Inc., which also carries fitness equipment, has been an exhibitor in the builders show for the past five years. For the show, they have the latest sauna model, a triangular-shaped corner heater unit with an all-glass front.

McCoy's saunas are computer designed and built from kiln-dried, western red cedar. They can be custom installed by the company or it can become a winter project for the do-it-yourselfer. Sizes range from four feet wide to as large as you can accommodate. Prices start at \$1,200.

Home

Homeowners are discovering a new, economical way to transform traditional concrete paving into colorful works of art.

Albanelli Patterned Concrete of Farmington Hills is at the forefront of this trend by turning ordinary concrete sidewalks and driveways into colorful and realistic-looking patterns that resemble elaborate tile and paving stones.

Depending on the size ordered, there can be significant savings compared to hand-laid brick or tile.

Owners Paul and Wayne Albanelli shape and color concrete to resemble fancy brickwork, tile or cobblestones. The patterns may be standard or textured.

More than 30 different textured patterns and 40 colors are available. Interior surfaces will keep their original look with occasional vacuuming or mopping. Patterned concrete also has excellent durability in harsh northern climates.

At the builders show, Albanelli will show some of the many ways patterned concrete can be used to enhance a driveway, walk, pool deck or patio.

Flower

Jerry and Valerie Constance of Ann Arbor say they have the perfect solution for those who want to start a garden but haven't the time nor the soil to do it.

The solution is hydroponics, or "Soil-less Gardening." As the owner/operators of Bronk Hydro Garden, Jerry and Valerie want to show homeowners how easy it is to raise flowers and vegetables in water and nutrients. There are no weeds and no cultivating.

The gardens themselves are designed by Jerry Constance, a builder/contractor. A pump circulates water and nutrients through the plant's roots via PVC pipe. When the pump shuts off, gravity drains the water, allowing the plant's roots to dry out. During draining, the water recaptures oxygen to be circulated next time.

Plants grown this way require less intense sunlight to thrive. Last year, Jerry and Valerie raised tomato plants hydroponically in their heavily wooded back yard.

"Yet the plants grew to nine feet tall," Valerie said.

Furniture

Martin and Morgan Cates, owners of Grandma's Loft, are in the process of readying their highly successful furniture business for franchising. How successful?

In the past five years, they've sold 3,000 dining room sets from just one manufacturer. Since the first store opened in Grand Blanc, six years ago, they've added two more, in Flint and Rochester.

Cates credits part of the company's success story to his lines of solid wood and upholstered, country-style furnishings.

"There was and still is, a lot of junk furniture on the market. So we reasoned that there was also a consumer need and desire for quality, solid wood pieces. I like oak, so we chose that wood for most of the furniture, and a country style. The combination has worked out quite well," Cates said.

Along with dining room sets featuring pedestal tables, Grandma's Loft carries hutches, occasional tables, bookcases, entertainment centers, decorating accessories and custom-made furniture, which makes up 20-25 percent of the company's sales.

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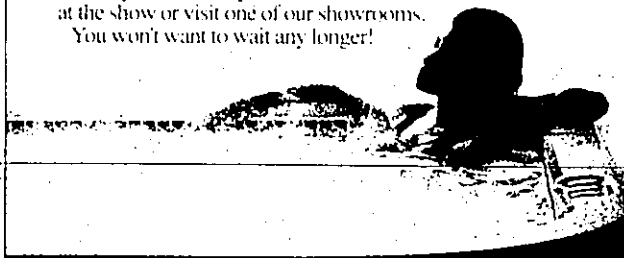
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