

Yule trim a vintage season tradition

By Janice Tiger-Kramer
special writer

THERE'S NOTHING like Christmas to bring out the tradition in all of us. After all, that's what Christmases are made of. For most, Christmas starts when those worn but well-loved decorations reappear to embellish the house for the holidays.

But the notion of decorating houses and tree branches with colorful things is hardly new. The tradition began in Germany in the 1600s, when trees were cut and brought inside to decorate with fruits, vegetables, nuts and ornaments made of whipped sugar.

Besides the traditional Christmas decorations we know, like nativity scenes, beaded garland and red and green globes, you'll find a unique batch of holiday goods in stores this year that will start new traditions and turn holiday decorating into a work of art.

"More and more people are decorating two Christmas trees for the house. One is for all of the old, traditional family ornaments. The other is a theme tree done with new, decorative ornaments to match the colors in the house," said Linda Wilson, co-owner of Christmas Magic in Rochester Hills and Westland.

YOU'LL FIND a wide selection of Renaissance-style ornaments at



This charming new collection called the North Pole series is pure fantasy. The North Pole collectibles from Dept. 56 includes Santa's workshop, reindeer barn, toy shop, helpers, reindeer and sleigh as well as Mr. & Mrs. Claus. The hand-painted bisque set is the first imaginative set from Dept. 56. Pieces sell for \$15-\$72.

Christmas Magic in jeweled-tone and iridescent colors like jade, grape, mauve and teal. Jesters, clowns, sprays and globes resembling old-fashioned brooches sell for \$3-\$5. There's also garland made of jeweled-tone ribbon and richly colored, braided cord.

Christmas Magic also features woodland ornaments made of pine cones and other natural materials like dried mushroom. The collection of pine cones, cardinals and other wildlife sell for \$2.50-\$8.

Besides an abundant supply of

religious ornaments, Michigan Catholic Supply, Redford, stocks two elaborately dressed Santas, Russian Santa and Russian Saint Nicholas.

The striking Russian Saint Nicholas (\$179.95), made of a heavy, papier-mache-like material, is 32 inches high. The decorative Santa carries bells, has a full yarn beard, crown and a colorful, tapestry costume. The Russian Santa (\$128) is 18 inches high, has a ceramic face and hands and a richly colored native outfit. Both stand firmly on cone-shaped bottoms.

Michigan Catholic Supply also has resin and bisque nativity sets, most from \$25 to \$300 for wood sets.

Gift bibles start at under \$6 for paper to \$46 for handsome, leather bound books. Children's Precious Moments bibles with pages for recording are \$22.95. A popular statue for gift giving is The Most Precious Gift, with Santa holding baby Jesus in his arms.

THE DICKEN'S Village, part of the Heritage Village collectibles from Dept. 56, has been a favorite decoration for eight seasons. New pieces include the Victoria Station, \$100, the train platform, \$20, and Bishop's Oast, \$45. Gift bags and tins with scenes from the Dicken's Village start at just \$2.

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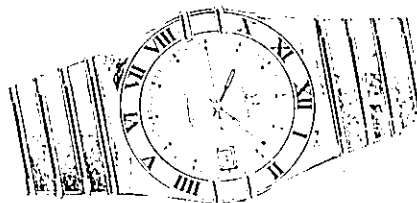
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