

SUBURBAN LIFE

C

SOCIAL EYES



DENISE LUCAS

Group enjoys the Big Apple

Denise Lucas' column Social Eyes alternates with Gretchen Hitch's column The Scene. To leave a message for Lucas, on a touch-tone phone, call 953-2047, Ext. 1868. You can mail information to Lucas at The Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009, or call her at 4420-2339.

THE BIG APPLE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Two weeks before Christmas and all through the plane. Not a traveler was quiet, they all were insane. Their coats were placed in the overhead with care. In hopes that the aircraft soon would be there. The Winemans were nestled all snug in their seats. While vibrations of Bloomingdale's danced in their feet. Varsie Walsh in her derby, Irene Davis in her hat With Teri Tietmeyer and Dee Monodidis they eagerly sat. O'er 200 were jetting to New York for the day. Some to sightsee, some to power shop, some to see a great play. Gathering early (not too bright-eyed) Metro Airport at seven. Some with friends, others family, returning to-night after 11. What a great fund-raiser for the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation! Margo Salyer chartered a plane for the perfect one-day vacation. The sun was shining, one day before the big storm. Three buses headed for Macy's, "Can you believe it's this warm?"

See SOCIAL EYES, 3C

Yule decor Family brightens the holiday scene



There's no place like home for the holidays, and Suzanne and Tony Rea of Bloomfield Hills are among those families who go all out in sprucing up the scene, to make a merry Christmas.

BY ETHEL SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

It helps that a family owns a florist business when it comes to decorating for Christmas.

Suzanne Rea and her husband, Tony, an architect-builder, of Bloomfield Hills own Thrifty Flowers, with 10 stores in the Detroit area. With the help of David Calcaterra, who is their merchandising manager, and Mike Koczwar, director of operations, the Rea residence conveys the Yuletide spirit.

Two Christmas trees and lots of greenery, along with plants and other special seasonal decorations, enhance three big rooms — the Great Room, the family dining room and the game room. Each room has its own unique fireplace, adorned with colorful trimmings that add to the wintry, holiday mood.

"David decorates a lot of homes in this area, and he does all the trees at the stores," Suzanne said.

In the cathedral-ceiling Great Room, a spectacular 15-foot Christmas tree stands in front of the windows. Suzanne's daughter-in-law, Anna Rea of Birmingham, described the tree as having "kind of a della Robbia look." It is hung with gold French silk ribbon, swags of tulle and tapestry, and gold roping.

Underneath the big tree are delightful children's toys such as wooden Pinocchios and Steiff animals including bears and giraffes. There is a little train that runs on a track

around the tree, and a procession of bright, wooden circus wagons.

Suzanne, who collects toys, used to own The Toy Store in Dearborn. Now she participates in the family floral business, doing "the fun part — going on buying trips."

In the Great Room, the huge stone fireplace from a French chateau is dramatically decorated for the holidays. On the mantle is greenery called salal, which Calcaterra spray-painted with gold. Two free-standing wrought-iron candelabra are adorned with burgundy and gold bows. The fireplace is banked with white poinsettias. A creche of wooden figures hand-carved in Italy has been placed in front of a bookcase next to the fireplace.

Suzanne said the house was built in 1925, and she and her husband have been restoring it since moving there five years ago. "It's been a fun house to redo," she declared. The Great Room fireplace and candelabra (as well as the other fireplaces) are part of the original house.

The second Christmas tree in the Rea home is a charming, smaller one, in the family dining room. "David did the plaid ribbons, and the children decorated the tree with ornaments they've collected," Suzanne said. "A lot of the dolls and toys around both trees are theirs." Winnie the Pooh, Snoopy and Paddington Bear are just some of the characters on the tree ornaments.

The dining room fireplace has a wood-paneled wall decorated with



STEPHEN CANTRELL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Bloomfield Hills resident Suzanne Rea (left) and daughter-in-law Anna Rea of Birmingham stand in front of elaborate 15-foot Christmas tree in the Great Room.

garlands and poinsettia. The chandelier above the dining room table wears holiday trimmings, and the centerpiece on the table includes gold

cherubs and baskets. Also on the table is a real gingerbread house, surrounded by

See DECOR, 2C

Parties in their barn celebrate Christmas

BY ETHEL SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

With four barns on their 23-acre property, Ginny and Ara Berberian of Southfield enjoy using one of the barns especially for parties.

This holiday season, the Berberians will host two parties in the barn. One will be a family party for 35 people, centered in their home but overflowing into the barn, and the other will be a post-Christmas open house for 70 guests, in the barn.

Ara, who is an opera singer — he's a leading bass with the Metropolitan Opera in New York — designed the barn, which they had built for them 10 years ago. Last year, they added a kitchen.

"My husband loves barns," Ginny exclaimed. "We built this barn for entertaining." Because they are so enthusiastic about the Christmas season, they chose green for the color of the barn's kitchen counters, to go with a Yuletide decor.

Inside the barn, garlands of greenery adorn the windows above the kitchen counter. Round tables for guests, as well as the buffet table, are topped with red and

'My husband loves barns. We built this barn for entertaining.'

Ginny Berberian
Southfield resident

green plaid cloths. A Christmas tree, with miniature sheet music trim, stands on a table, making the tree look even taller. Outside the barn, cedar roping is looped on a weathered old pine fence. "I did the whole barn in the last three days by myself," Ginny said.

The exterior of the barn is cedar, and the interior of the barn, as well as the family kitchen in the house, is all 100-year-old barnwood. "We refinished the floor ourselves. The kids helped."

The couple has two sons, ages 18 and 26, and a daughter, 23.

"The barn has three lives," she explained, on a tour of its three levels. The first floor is where parties are held. The second floor is furnished with miscellaneous old things, in an eclectic style, and the top floor is a little family room.

The Berberians collect American primitive antiques and old farm tools. Throughout the barn, antiques combine with other casual furnishings. A stuffed rooster pulling a sleigh and china roosters (Ginny collects roosters) are displayed on the kitchen counter year-round. "I just bought my latest rooster two days ago," she said, showing a big cookie jar shaped like a rooster, who crows when the top is lifted from the jar.

The Berberian home and party barn overlook a natural outdoor setting where the Rouge and Franklin rivers join. "It's our little world here," Ginny said, with her ever-present broad smile.

After the family Christmas dinner at the house, everyone will gather in the barn for dessert and to sing carols. The Berberians are Armenian, and when she entertains, Ginny often cooks Armenian food. For the open house, Ginny will make and serve an Armenian braided Christmas bread called "chorog," which has black caraway seeds in it. Each year, she also makes rum cakes.

See BARN, 2C

Party barn: Ginny Berberian of Southfield stands on porch of the barn, next to her home, where family holds parties and does holiday entertaining.

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