

MALLS&MAINSTREETS

Catalogs from page 5B

are shot at luscious locations like Michigan's own Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island or the Hotel del Coronado on Coronado Island near San Diego.

"A catalog costs about \$50,000 or \$60,000 to produce," Simons explained. "And most of the work is done on computer, which saves time and money. Our computer system gives us a competitive edge with faster turnaround time, advanced proofing techniques and more innovative design capabilities."

"I also have a staff willing to work the hours it takes to make deadlines and get the job done. That's why I think we've been so successful. It's that Midwest work ethic. National companies are discovering what hard workers we are here."

Simons' own hard work and energy built Group SAA, Ltd. from one-man ad agency founded by Simon in 1973 into the multimillion company it has become. Simon grew up in Oak Park, graduated from Southfield High School in 1970 and studied busi-

ness in college for two years.

"But I left school because I couldn't wait to get out in the world and start my own company," he recalled. "At 20 years old, I was the nation's youngest ad agency president. Experience is the best school."

Simons, his wife Diane, and two children, live in West Bloomfield. Diane is the third step in a three-point proofing process that works to ensure accuracy and clarity in catalog copy.

Simons fell into producing catalogs as a special favor to some clients and then realized he had a knack for the work. He takes pride in never missing a deadline and never coming in over budget. His client list grows as the sales figures rise from the catalogs in circulation.

According to the publication "Statistical Abstracts," catalog sales in the U.S. topped 4.7 billion in 1989 and 1990. In 1991, catalog sales fell slightly to \$4.5 billion. It doesn't hurt that the catalog industry itself is on a hot streak.

The industry expects catalog use to continue through the decade as an alternative to traditional shopping for busy Americans.

Besides not every retailer wants or needs space on the selling floor. Through their almost historical catalogs, retailers like L.L. Bean and Williams and Sonoma, have customers in more places than they could ever hope to open stores.

An example of the clever soft sell that may be Group SAA's trademark, professional actors were used to shoot the Uniforms by Mindy catalog for restaurants and hotels. It's hard to get excited about waitstaff attire, but the Group SAA staff spiced up the catalog with mini theatrical scenes of amorous-looking chefs, waitresses with stems of roses clenched in their teeth, and manly diners being pinched by vengeful lobsters. The president of the uniform company, Jay Gerwitz of Norcross, Ga., was delighted with the results.

Right now, the crew is working

on a Morley's Candy catalog. The chocolate-peanut-caramel turtles picture took five hours to set up and is ready to shoot at last. The candy spills out of the box from two directions and silk ivy vines fill in the background.

"Chocolate is difficult to shoot," explained Julie Cummings, an art director. "There are all kinds of little tricks you can use to make it look inviting. One is to wait until it starts to melt a bit so it's glistening and very moist-looking."

Since "the photos sell the product," the tempting photos of nuts and candies overflowing from colorful tins and packages in the Kar's Holiday Nut Catalog will mean big sales this season. "Oh definitely," said Michelle Novak, of Kar's. "The pictures in this catalog are the best ever! I dare you to look through the book without ordering something!"

All the leaves are brown, and the sky is gray. I'll take the Trio of Treats Tin on the 15th page ...

Hudson's from page 5B

Hudson's 21st store was opened in 1992 in Traverse City. Female shoppers have long lamented that it's difficult to shop in Hudson stores because the clothing de-

partments are located on several different floors. The improvements planned for the stores address this complaint.

Over 500,000 square feet of space will be affected by the remodeling projects. Business will go on as usual during the renovations. Northland Hudson's was

built in 1954 and is Hudson's oldest and largest store. Eastland debuted in 1956, Westland in 1965 and Southland in 1970.

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