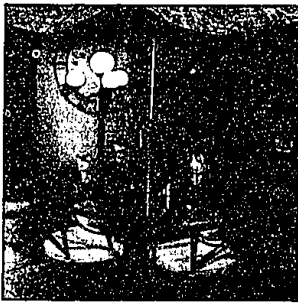


MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Sunday, May 25, 1997

B4



The newest from Jimmie's Rustics.

Bar sets star at patio parties

BY DONNA MULCAHY
SPECIAL WRITER

Patio bar sets — tables and chairs the height of bars and bar stools — are what the well-dressed deck is wearing this summer.

"We took these on two years ago and they really took off, but this year the sale of bar sets for the deck are on fire," said Joe Snider, owner of Country Squire Inc. in Livonia, selling outdoor furniture for the past 26 years. "I'd say that out of every 10 patio sets we sell, one is a bar set."

SHOPPING CENTERED

Some people buy bar sets as their main patio set. Others, who have large decks or multiple decks, put a bar set out along with a standard set according to Snider.

"Bar sets are perfect for entertaining, because you can stand or sit down at them, and because you're up high, it's easier to see over deck railings."

What else is new in home patio furnishings? To find out, I contacted Jim Sica and his sister, Maria Sica-Panzer, owners of Jimmie's Rustics in Birmingham, Livonia and Novi. The business has been in their family for 62 years, specializing in outdoor furniture and accessories.

They agreed that more and more people are buying upscale patio furniture.

"Most Baby Boomers have already gone through a starter set, and now they want something better, something their friends and neighbors don't have," Sica said. "They're buying it like it's furniture for the inside of their home — they're putting that much thought into it. It's not just something to throw out on their deck."

The most popular patio sets have always been made of extruded aluminum, because it's affordable, long-lasting and easy to care for, both Sica and Snider said. However, the demand for sets made out of more expensive materials, like wrought iron and cast aluminum, is increasing.

Wrought iron tends to be very ornamental and sturdy, but people have shied away from it for many years because of its tendency to rust. However, thanks to new rust-proofing finishes, it's making a comeback.

Still, wrought iron does require special care. "You have to make sure that when you slide the chairs under the table, that they don't touch each other, to prevent nicks and scratches. And whenever you do see a nick in the finish, you should repair it right away," Snider said.

Full-service patio stores, like Jimmie's Rustics and Country Squire, carry touch-up paint for the wrought iron furniture that they sell. With the proper maintenance, a wrought iron set can go five to 10 years without needing to be refinished, Snider said.

Cast aluminum sets are made by pouring molten, liquid metal into cast forms, whereas extruded aluminum pieces are made by shaping cold metal with compression machines.

Cast aluminum pieces can last forever and have very intricate designs because of the way they're made. The only maintenance they require is to be hosed off now and then, and be covered or stored away during the winter, Sica said.

In addition to wrought iron and cast aluminum, Sica said he has noticed a demand for wooden furniture, especially pieces made of teak, which is very expensive. Snider said that the demand for wooden furniture at his store spiked a little last year, but now it's non-existent.

Wooden furniture requires either a lot of maintenance or very little, depending on the look you want, they said.

"If you want it ship-shape, like a boat, then you're in for a lot of maintenance," Sica said. "It needs to be cleaned and re-oiled twice a season and covered in the winter."

But if you want the wood to look gray, then you don't have to do anything to it, because it naturally grays as it ages.

Teak is the best wood when it comes to outdoor furniture, said Sica, because its both durable and beautiful.

"People make benches out of teak and it gets very silvery as it ages, but it doesn't get bluish, like other woods," he said. "In Europe, they don't even want to put teak out unless its old. They can't wait for it to get old, because they prefer that silvery look."

In addition to buying patio sets made of more expensive materials, people are buying sets with rectangular and oval tables, just to be different, Sica and Snider said.

Mall fun offers kids a lesson

Twelve Oaks offers shoppers a multi-media rainforest exhibit — complete with live iguanas and friendly(?) pythons.

Did you know that 75 percent of the earth's oxygen comes from the rainforest?

Or that rainforests give us 40-percent of our medicines?

Or that rainforests can get up to 400 inches of rainfall a year compared to Michigan's 27 inches?

Or that rainforests are being destroyed at a rate comparable to four city blocks each minute?

Twelve Oaks in Novi is celebrating the rainforest with a distinctive sand exhibit with accompanying performance schedule through June 29.

In early May, 300 tons of sand was delivered to the shopping center's center court and a crew of six artists began sculpting it into the wonders and mysteries of the rainforest pictured.

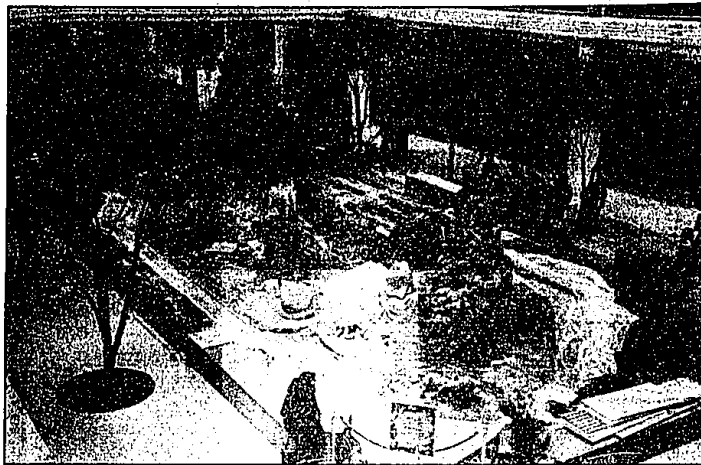
In addition, live rainforest animals are visiting the center, a laser disc rainforest movie on a leaf-shaped sand structure screen is airing, and an Exploration Station is offering an interactive computer trek through the Amazon with high-speed connections to rainforest web sites.

All events are free. Plus, guests who spend \$100 or more at the mall during Project Rainforest, receive the "Backyard Adventure" booklet with passes to many area institutions and cultural events.

Co-hosts of the program are the Detroit Science Center, the Living Science Foundation, MST TechnoKids, and the Children's Theatre of Michigan.

Here are the program highlights:

May 31: "Rainforests of the World," presented by the Living Science Foundation, in JC Penney Court at noon, 1, 2 and 3 p.m. Guests can get up close and personal with a live alligator, iguana, python, toucan, lizard and Pantagonyan cavy. Event repeated Sunday, June 1 at 1, 2, and 3 p.m.
June 7-8: "Forest Trails and Jun-



gle Trails" an original musical production by the Children's Theatre of Michigan in JC Penney Court at 1 and 3 p.m.
June 14-15: A repeat of the May 31 program.
Twelve Oaks is at 1-86 and Novi Road, open daily 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sundays 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information call (248) 949-9438.
- Susan DeMaggio

PHOTOS BY BILLS HANSEN

"Edutainment": Savvy mall marketers know that these days people want more reasons to come to the mall than merely shopping. Twelve Oaks often leads the way in providing first class entertainment for shoppers, making sure the educational element is present for the mall's core customer — families.

Target launches education initiative

BY SUSAN DEMAGGIO
EDITOR

A good education matters to Target shoppers, so improving America's schools is the new mission of Target stores.

Relating focus group concerns about our public education system in the 21st century, Minneapolis-based Target (the largest division of the Dayton Hudson Corp.) announced the creation of the Take Charge of Education program, now available to 93,000 schools nationwide.

"Because education funding remains a critical issue, we believe there is a real need for more public/private partnerships to help support our children's schools," said Target communications vice-president Gail Dorn.

The retailer now offers this multi-tiered program:

- \$1 million for teachers who want to continue

their education. Two \$500 scholarships will be awarded at each participating Target store. One \$2,750 scholarship will be awarded per Target district.

• Beginning in May, Target charge card customers can designate that 1-percent of their Quest Card purchases go to the school of their choice. If Target gets 25 new and approved charge applications by Oct. 31, 1997, that school gets a \$200 bonus.

• Target All-Around Scholarships for a total of \$1.6 million to student leaders. Each store has two \$1,000 scholarships for college-bound seniors. In 1997, four \$10,000 scholarships will be awarded to students.

• A state-of-the-art voice mail system that parents can call 24-hours a day for updates on their children's assignments, T/O information, sports schedules, and more. (It's being tested in Min-

neapolis, Dallas, Los Angeles, Washington D.C. and St. Louis.)

• Target will carry discounted school uniforms for schools that wish to adopt a uniform policy.

• An EarthSavers Club for kids who want to receive newsletters and activity materials to "help them have fun while they care caring for the planet."

• Grants for the arts and Good Neighbor Volunteer Programs through partnerships formed with community organizations.

Since it was founded in 1962, Target operates 752 stores in 39 states. In 1997, Target plans to give back \$35 million to communities through grants, special programs and team member donations, according to company officials.

To sign up for Take Charge of Education credit, open a Target charge, or learn more about the new education programs, call 1-800-316-6142.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

Trunk Show

See Zeld's Transition Fall I and II at Hersh's 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. May 30 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and May 31 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The line offers classic garments with many details. The Boardwalk, Orchard Lake's, of Maple, West Bloomfield. (248) 626-7776.

SATURDAY, MAY 31

Spring Barbie Show/Sale

Noted Barbie Doll dealer and appraiser Norita Bergman of Troy coordinates a series of three Barbie Shows of which this is number two. (The next will be a pre-holiday show at the mall Oct. 11.) 12 dealers will offer unique and hard-to-find Barbie items, plus accessories from the past and present. Bergman will provide free appraisals in center court from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Meadowbrook Village Mall.

Walton/Adams, Rochester Hills. (248) 376-9451.

Concert/Show

High-energy performers Act Four, presented by SH-BOOM of Ohio, take to the Crowley's stage at 4 and 7:30 p.m. The concert is free, spotlighting the musical styles of The Drifters, Elvis, Four Seasons, Temptations, Smothers Brothers, Mamas and Papas and The Beach Boys.

Livonia Mall, Seven Mile/Middlebelt. (248) 475-1160.

DKNY Workshop

Saks Fifth Avenue hosts a DKNY Summer Wardrobe Workshop with special representative Irene Jorgensen noon to 5 p.m. in Casual Sportswear, second floor.

Somerset Collection South

Big Beaver/Coolidge, Troy. (248) 614-3317.

Shoe coloring contest

Rocard's Stride Rite invites kids to come in and color a shoe, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Prizes by rgs. The Boardwalk, Orchard Lake's, Maple, West Bloomfield. (248) 932-5308.

News of special events for shoppers is included in this calendar. Send information to: Malls & Mainstreets, c/o The Observer & Eccentric 805 East Maple, 48009; or fax (248) 644-1314. Deadline: Wednesday 5 p.m. for publication on Sunday.

SUNDAY, MAY 25

Dinosaur exhibit

"Blast from the Past" features eight moving, roaring dinosaurs in natural setting, plus related activities, information booths, and classes by Cranbrook Science Center staff for school groups. Through July 7. Co-sponsored by Blue Caro Network, Cranbrook and the mall. Dinosaurs by Kokoro Dinosaurs of Los Angeles. Oakland Mall, 14 Mile/John R. Troy. (248) 636-4114.

MONDAY, MAY 26

Memorial Day

Limited holiday shopping hours at most area centers, mostly 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

THURSDAY, MAY 29