

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

Readers voice their concerns at home show

The first of the 2002 home improvement shows took place Jan. 31 to Feb. 3 at the Novi Expo Center, and boy, was it a dandy. So were the prices that were marked on the major home appliances on display, enough to give you the sticker shock I have been writing about.

The questions I answered ran along the same lines as most other years, with refrigerator water and ice dispensers leading the way. That water valve where the water line hooks up is still the major component to fail.

Many homeowners inquired about product recalls that I've previously written about, and I felt their concerns are stronger than ever. I think there should be a rule that a manufacturer be required to publish a list of all recalls that occurred during each year for up to five years. Some of these product failures cause serious injury and death, and a one-time publication doesn't do enough good toward preventing these happenings. It would take up a lot of space in the newspaper, but I think publishing product recalls would be a good public service project.

Front load washers

There were several comments made about the sleek-looking appearance of front load washers. The most common question asked about these products was in regard to their reliability. "Should we buy now or wait until they get the bugs out?"

There have been some serious problems with some washing machines manufactured within the past couple of years. You may not have heard about these problems, which occurred after the products were in the customer's home. Little was said, but the manufacturer made contact with each customer. My opinion is to hold off on purchasing newly designed washers. Give these products some time to prove themselves.

Whirlpool

I'm feeling sorry for Michigan-based Whirlpool these days. They've had some problems perfecting a washer in the last year, and just recently announced the recall of 1.6 million under-the-cupboard microwaves. On top of that Whirlpool also announced the recall of 1.4 million dehumidifiers. The estimated cost to take care of the problem is \$74 million. You and I would go broke real fast if we couldn't do a better job right from the get-go.

European products

I saw the European-made products on display and I think they are beautiful. When you open a door on a kitchen range, it doesn't take much to compare the sound and feel to the one in your home. I will never get over how hot some American-made kitchen ranges get on outside surfaces. It is appalling how this is allowed to happen without anyone even trying to stop it. The manufacturers should be ashamed of themselves for building them that way.

I noticed new interior designs on European dishwashers that really catch the eye. Can you imagine a tray that sits on the top rack where you lay utensils down? It sure makes it easy to pick them up before you sort them into a storage drawer. I want to thank all of you who stopped by to say hello and for the many nice comments you made about this newspaper. You put a smile on my face. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can be heard Saturday and Sunday on 760 WJZR. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. His phone number is (313) 873-9789.

Love that Red

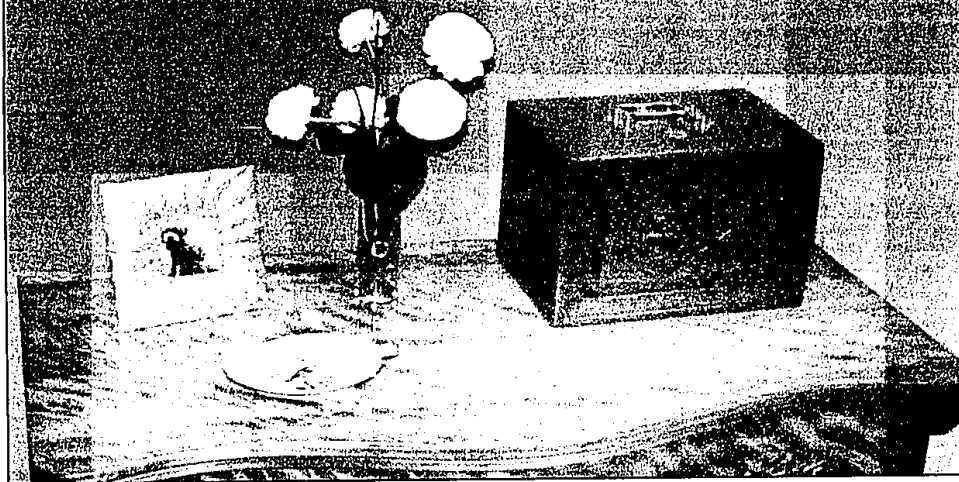


PHOTO COURTESY OF PUBLICITYWORKS

Vivid: This photograph — electronically altered to include more background — shows the vivid shade of red in Tim Robinson's bedroom. Robinson, a florist, often accents the wall's hues with yellow mums or pink tulips.

Daring owner spices home with fresh crimson

BY LANA MINI
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First in an ongoing series on the use of color.

Common cream and bourgeois beige seem safe, but move over Martha Stewart because not everyone seeks subtlety in home decor. In the spirit of Valentine's Day, we explored the color red and its growing popularity.

From bold color on big walls to subtle touches of crimson on the rubber end of a spatula, daring homeowners are welcoming red into their homes. Tim Robinson, of West Bloomfield, not only embraces it, but knows how to use it. A red gazebo gives an Asian feeling to this backyard. Tomato red oversize leather wing chairs evoke a 1940s feeling to his living room.

And then ... there's his bedroom. To achieve the perfect shade of red Robinson used 14 coats of glaze; eight of them were cream and gold and the others are reddish-pink and brown. The result is a red with brilliant magenta and orange hues instead of one flat color.

Robinson created the shade because he liked it; it's fresh and rich and far from the bordello reds of the 1970s. Connie Lovell, of Lovell Interior Designs in Birmingham, said the reds with a hint of cinnamon or orange are more current than blue-red.

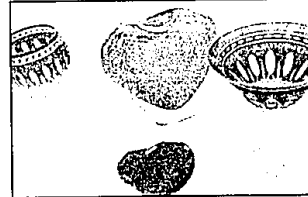
Perk up a room

"It really perks up a room," Robinson said. "People who see the room truly like it, but I think might be intimidated to use it in their own house."

No color, however, is safer than another, Lovell said.



"When using red, keep it in context with the rest of its color palette," she said. For example, in a room with a shade of warm cinnamon add splashes of yellow. With blue-red, add blue or even violet for a cooler effect. If used correctly, the red will appear to fall in with the other colors; if it's not it will seem to sit on top of it, Lovell said.



STAFF PHOTO BY JERRY ZIMINSKY

Accents: Red accents can spice up any room. The red crystal Elsa Peretti Heart paperweight, retails for \$45 from Tiffany & Co. The large red heart vase, from Salviati, \$800, is in honor of Valentine's Day. Waterford crystal wine goblets and martini glasses, \$149 a pair. At left, forget neutral colors this red 'Manhattan' sectional from UpCountry Birmingham, \$5,000, is a fun addition to a living room. (Photo courtesy of PublicityWorks.)

Please see RED, C2

GARDENING

Mahogany pods contain beauty inside

We spent some time in the Florida Keys last month and brought back mahogany tree seeds.

According to the encyclopedia, mahogany was the name applied originally to trees of the genus *Swietenia*, commonly known as true mahogany, the most important of which is the West Indian mahogany, *S. mahogany*, of extreme southern Florida and the West Indies.

There are others, but we are only concerned with the tree growing in Florida. As far as I know, they are growing on Cudjoe and Big Pine Keys. The attractive seedpods that hang

GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

from the tree are fascinating.

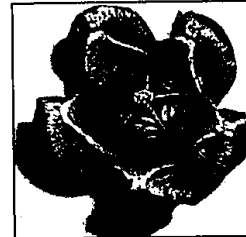
After we picked the pods from the tree (using a boat hook and a net to catch them), my brother-in-law, Jim, and husband, Lew, drilled holes around the bottom of each pod and tapped a very small nail into each hole.

As the pods (outer sections)

begin to open, the nails hold them in place. Inside an intricate series of layered brown seeds are revealed. A spray of clear acrylic preserves the seeds and keeps them intact.

I display them on a small candlestick (or you could use a small, clear container, or napkin ring to hold them upright).

The tree that provided our pods has growth that resembles an old apple tree. Although mahogany is a premier cabinet wood, it looks as though it would be very hard to find many



MARTY FIGLEY

Inside art: The seedpod from the mahogany tree is a work of art.

Please see MAHOGANY, C2