

## HALL

FROM PAGE C1

Meadow Brook Hall was the home of Matilda Dodge Wilson, widow of automobile pioneer John Dodge, and her second husband, lumber broker Alfred Wilson. It was built between 1926 and 1929.

The 88,000-square-foot, Tudor Revival style mansion – the fourth largest historic house museum in the country – contains 6½ closets, 24 powder rooms/bathrooms, eight secret vaults, five staircases and five safes.

Handmade tile and gold-plated fixtures are just some of the artistic, elegant elements that can be seen in the spaces Out of the Closet will reveal.

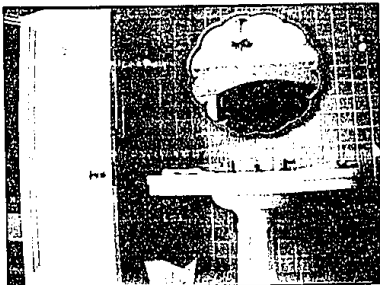
Each family or guest bedroom had at least one large walk-in closet or hall of closets. Hat stands, hangers and drawer liners were covered in coordinated fabrics that matched the adjoining bedroom, bath and dressing room. All closets had custom-made hardware.

Matilda Dodge Wilson's suite contains two walk-in closets, and a separate dressing room with shelving space on 1-1/2 walls. Handpainted porcelain handles are on the door in Frances Dodge's dressing room.

Mrs. Wilson's bathroom is about 220 square feet. It features a separate area for the toilet and sit (seated) bath, which was used for therapeutic soaks for the hips and thighs; each area has a door for privacy.

The bathroom is adorned in different shades of pink, purple and aqua. The bathtub contains a tile mural depicting the myth of Leda and the Swan.

Mrs. Wilson was very well-organized. The Hall was



Matilda Dodge Wilson's bathroom features a large porcelain pedestal sink and pink tile by Rookwood Pottery, one of the United States' foremost art potteries.

## OUT OF THE CLOSET AND ARTIST SERIES

What: A new tour will grant access to many areas of Meadow Brook Hall that were previously off-limits. A featured artist series will showcase the works of local artists in the Hall's Cafe Cappuccino and Fountain Room.

Where: Meadow Brook Hall, on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills.

Gallery opening: Thursday, March 13, featuring a wine-and-cheese reception and an Out of the Closet tour. Doors open at 7 p.m. Admission to the opening is free, although donations are welcome. For reservations or more information: Call (248) 370-3140.

planned and built to offer maximum convenience and storage. Some of the safes were to be used by guests who preferred to lock up their valuables.

## ARTIST SERIES

The series will showcase the works of local artists in Meadow Brook Hall's Cafe Cappuccino and Fountain Room. All of the displayed works will be available for purchase. A new artist will be featured every three months.

Lorraine Leigh will be the first featured artist, as her photographs of Meadow Brook Hall are exhibited.

"Matilda Dodge Wilson was a huge patron of the arts, and especially interested in discovering and supporting local artists," Victor said.

"It is only fitting that as we kick off our new Out of the Closet tours, our first featured artist, Lorraine Leigh, focuses her work on Meadow Brook Hall – unveiling the secrets and stories of the past."

"I wanted to focus attention on the stunning detail and craftsmanship that might be otherwise overshadowed by the sheer immensity of the Hall," said Leigh, a Rochester Hills resident.

"I especially wanted to help others see the intimate qualities that made this a warm, livable home."

"Once you move beyond the initial awe of the size and scale, you realize that this is not an austere place – it's a cozy, family-oriented dwelling that pays tribute to the artist's skill."

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## Furnish your gardens with restful areas

Soon it will be time to furnish our gardens with suitable pieces so we can have a restful place to sit while admiring our beautiful gardens.

Garden furniture comes in many colors – black, gray, blue, pink, red, green, lavender, white and many more.

It also is made of many different materials, from logs to the newest manmade products. Other materials in use include wrought iron, tubing, cast iron, aluminum,



Garden Spot

Marty Fligley

wood, wicker, resins and poly. Plastics such as milk containers are recycled into furniture. Styles range from rustic to very sleek, and there is something for every garden situation no matter what the size of the area.

Before you buy anything, take a stroll around your property to see where a table and chairs, or a single chair or bench, will be placed.

As you shop, think of the pros and cons for each type and consider style, size, color, and how much care it will need. Fabric cushions, if they aren't waterproof, may need to be taken indoors in inclement weather and a storage space will need to be found. If furniture is to be taken indoors for the winter, space will also be needed. You may wish to cover it for protection.

Wooden pieces need to be painted or stained regularly, and when wrought-iron furniture needs repainting, it can be a costly project, especially if done by a professional.

Sling chairs, captain's chairs and old-fashioned deck chairs will eventually need to have the fabric replaced. They do fold easily for storage, as do those made of aluminum. A new chair on the market is the Catskill Sling Adirondack by GFI Casual. It has a UV-resistant material sling back and seat



Our little Hummingbird Bistro set by Garden Pals Inc. is the perfect set for our front entrance garden. The verdigris finish blends with a nearby bench.

as opposed to wood.

Poly and resin furniture will need to be washed often, sometimes scrubbed if they aren't cleaned regularly. They can be left out all year round.

Redwood, teak and white cedar are durable and last for years, and can be protected with a sealant, stained or painted. Redwood turns brownish and teak and cedar turn gray when left to weather naturally.

Aluminum furniture is light in weight and can be left out all winter. Care is minimal, other than needing an occasional wash.

No matter what type of furniture you choose, look for well-constructed and sturdy pieces. It's no fun to sit in a chair and have it collapse!

## FINDING THE SITE

Let your imagination guide you as you choose where the new (or refurbished) furniture will fit in your garden.

Color is such a personal choice, you might want to paint the furniture to match the colors in the flowers.

You won't need a lot of space for a pretty bistro table and two chairs. This will provide ample room to visit with a friend or to have lunch on a sunny day.

I saw two purple Adirondack chairs placed on the lawn at Chanticleer in Pennsylvania – what a pleasant surprise! We had our boring, cream wrought-iron furniture painted a soft Williamsburg blue and enjoy it often. The flowers in the umbrella match.

Tuck a chair or two near a

trellis where afternoon shade provides a cool retreat. Make several areas around the garden into places where furniture will allow you to enjoy each different part of the garden.

The benches we see in the front gardens or on porches are so inviting and also provide a place to set container gardens for a bright touch.

It's important to place furniture on a level surface. A small area can be paved in many ways. Brick, pavers, flat stones, cement, cement formed and colored to represent bricks or stones, a large slab of granite, or wood chips are all suitable.

Finish the edges of the area with low plants or another attractive material so the surface blends with the surrounding edges such as grass.

Measure so the size is right, or actually set the furniture in the spot before constructing the base.

What a treat it would be to walk around the garden and come upon a welcome place to sit and enjoy. This may be just the spot to encourage visitors as well as the gardener to "take time to smell the roses."

## GOOD GARDEN TIP

Prune fruit trees – apple, peach and pear – now before the sap starts to move. Wait until early summer to prune ornamental trees.

Marty Fligley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch tone phone. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.



Frances Dodge's bathroom features painted tiles with floral and dragonfly motifs by the American Encaustic Tiling Company.

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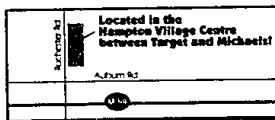
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Winter Sale

Free Sink Cut Out for Month of March, Sales Excluded

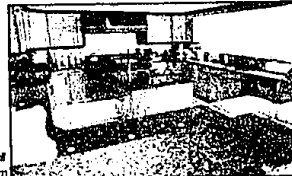
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