

At Home

INTERIOR DESIGN • DIY • GARDENING

Spa service

Military mothers treated
to a day at the spa.
Observer Life, C5



Accents

Build a bouquet

Birmingham is blossoming with the second annual Build a Bouquet 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, May 17. Shoppers are invited to visit any participating store to receive a cut flower.

Visit one or all of the stores and build a bouquet-complements-of-participating stores. "This is a chance for downtown Birmingham stores to give a little something back to the community," said Richard Askrin, chair of the Downtown Birmingham PSD special events committee. "It's a small token, but you would be surprised at how a flower can brighten someone's day."

Birmingham merchants hope the promotion will bring new faces to Birmingham and encourage shoppers to visit stores they may not have seen in the past. To participate, shoppers can come to downtown Birmingham May 17, park in one of five conveniently located parking decks and start collecting flowers. Participating stores will have a window sign and maps to other locations.

For more information and a calendar of all events in downtown Birmingham, visit www.enjoybirmingham.com.

Flower Day

In 1965, most flower orders were not made with local flower growers, so they decided to try and find a way to increase awareness and availability of plants in the Detroit area. They decided that the first Sunday after Mother's Day, at Eastern Market in Detroit, they would host the largest display of annuals, perennials and vegetable plants.

The first Flower Day drew more than 20,000 people, even though plants were not sold, only displayed, and questions were answered by the growers about plants. The following year, growers sold the plants and the event grew. Today, more than 100,000 flats of plants are on display, making it the biggest event of its kind in the world, according to organizers. On Saturday, May 17, Flower Day will be sponsored by the Detroit Recreation Department and the Eastern Market Merchants Association. On Sunday, May 18, Flower Day will be sponsored by the Metro Flower Growers Association and EMMA.

Sunscreen

As summer approaches, most people are conscious of the necessity for sunscreen. Unfortunately for our furnishings, people are not as aware of the necessity to protect their homes against the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. Ultraviolet rays can eventually fade floors, furniture, upholstery and drapery fabrics - or even worse - a treasured painting.

The right window covering can block up to 99 percent of UV rays. Look for a percentage of UV blockage rating. The higher a product's rating, the better the home's interior is protected. Silhouette window shades from Hunter Douglas feature soft fabric, vases suspended between sheer fabric panels. For more information on window coverings, call (800) 937-7895 or visit www.hunterdouglas.com.



John Scoble of Kitchen Studios in Birmingham looks over maple cabinets with a glazed finish he recently installed inside The Ultimate Show House at the Somerset Collection in Troy.

PHOTOS BY TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

It's The Ultimate

Show House opens for visitors at Somerset

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK
STAFF WRITER

You'd thought you'd just run over to the Somerset Collection and browse the stores. After a few minutes of walking, you've come across a new storefront.

Actually, it's not a store at all. It's a replica of a home, a show house, a stonemason's throw from Neiman Marcus in Somerset South in Troy.

The 2003 Somerset Home and Garden Show features The Ultimate Show House, 6,000 square feet with 16 rooms, which retails for about \$2.5 million in a real-life setting in the Birmingham area.

Builder Doug Derocher estimates the actual cost at \$800,000 to \$1 million.

Nearly 80 percent of that was donated through the volunteer work of the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters and Millwrights; supplies from Stock Building Supply & Stock Architectural Millwork; and the brick, landscaping and masonry of J.C. Cornille. Approximately 35 local businesses provided building materials or labor to assist in the project.

Opening May 12 through June 20, the home will be the site of parties to raise money for charities or nonprofit organizations, such as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Sulte Dreams Project, CATCH, Habitat for Humanity and the United Way. The public can view the home during Somerset's business hours. Admission is free.

The idea of a show house was conceived after representatives of Dominick Tringali Architects of Bloomfield Hills made a site visit to a Las Vegas show



The wine pantry of the house comes complete with a stained glass door and cultured stone walls.

When: Show House opens Monday, May 12, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekends. Free to public. House will be open Monday, May 12-Friday, June 20.

PLEASE SEE SHOW, C3

Rugs, rings and things: Antiques take stage

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK
STAFF WRITER

Phyllis Sheppard of Farmington Hills remembers how she and a friend helped convince her husband, Bill, to purchase a Wedgwood ring from 1830 for her at an Antiques Show & Sale at Greenfield Village. "We kind of cornered him," she said with a laugh.

"It's a beautiful ring. You take off the ring and there's another design inside."

"They kind of talked me into it," Bill said.

Actually, the Sheppards are not antique buffs, looking for some rare, hidden treasures. They volunteer at Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum's complex (now known as The Henry Ford), and help with the Antiques Show each year. This year they'll help wallpaper booths for the exhibitors.

But what impresses them are the variety and significance of historical pieces exhibited in such an appropriate venue - at Lovett Hall, adjacent to Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum. More than 40 art and antique exhibitors carry a diverse assortment of fine antiques and collectibles for sale on May 17-18. (See related box.)

Kitty Bartholomew, host of HGTV's *Kitty Bartholomew: You're Home*, will appear at 1 p.m. Saturday, May 17, at the Greenfield Village Antiques Show & Sale. "There is just so much involved with the show, and some of it is just unbelievable," said Bill. "They have little glasswares, jewelry, Oriental rugs and old books. One year, the show had books dated from the 1800s from England. Bill is a retired civil engineer so he really appreciated an old surveyor's instrument he saw one year."

"They have a beautiful display of sterling silver, candelabras and antique spoons," said Phyllis. "It's a marvelous sight to see, even if you don't buy anything. It's a nice thing to see."

Geoffrey Orley of Shababang Persian Carpet in Bloomfield Hills hasn't exhibited at the show for several years. "I'm absolutely looking forward to it," Orley said. "It's sort of a 'coming home' event."

Susan Bishopric, Orley's publicist, said Orley spends much of his time explaining the differences between city and tribal prints in antique rugs. "He spends a lot of time educating people about antique rugs," Bishopric said. "He explains the difference in quality and technique that keeps the colors vibrant."

Bishopric said the city carpets are "more sophisticated," and the tribes are "more jazzy."

Cathy Hemmer of Farmington Hills will be a dealer at the Ulta

PLEASE SEE ANTIQUES, C2

MARKET PLACE

Submissions

Do you have a special item you'd like to showcase in Marketplace on the front of At Home? We'd like to feature it! Send a photo or slide of the piece, along with information, to: Ken Abramczyk, At Home editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.



Trunk Show

A Touch of Lace of Bloomfield Hills will have a Trunk Show 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, May 13-14, at the store's new location at 4036 Telegraph Road, at the corner of Long Lake Road. Lauren Disher and Linda Weissman, owners of A Touch of Lace, call Prated "the world's finest manufacturer of bed, bath and table linens." The company will be presenting many products along with new designs. This exclusive showing is open to the public. Call (248) 645-5223.

Simple Soaker

The Simple Soaker Landscape and Garden Sprinkling System is called an alternative to ineffective, water-wasting soaker hoses. Introduced by the L.R. Nelson Corp., Simple Soaker is available at leading retailers, including Home Depot, Target and select ACE, TruServ and Do It Best stores. Its retail price starts at \$29.99. Installation takes 15 minutes or less and doesn't require any tools. Just lay out the tubing around the area you want watered, attach the professional-grade sprinklers, and adjust the nozzles to the spray patterns you want. Once the system is installed, it can be left in the same location all year. Simple Soaker comes complete with tubing, sprinklers with adjustable nozzles, spray deflectors, risers, caps, stakes and "grom" plugs. For more information, visit www.Simple-Soaker.com.