

Fixture store beats recession

By LINDA TAYLOR

Mel Rycus, who opened his Orchard Lake Road lighting fixtures and antiques shop just before Christmas, wants to keep his business small and personal—as the shop's name implies—Limited Editions by Mel Rycus, Inc.

Rycus, immediate past mayor of Orchard Lake Village, said he has been in big business with customers nationwide and a staff to manage. Now, he says he "won't go big again" and just wants to succeed at offering his custom creations and antiques to his retail and commercial customers.

Rycus and his wife Barbara "she keeps the books off my back," use their shop at 4200 Orchard Lake Road in Orchard Lake as a showroom. Rycus and a "young helper" work primarily at the shop at Laverne and Eight Mile designing and creating the wide range of lighting fixtures—from a 15-foot wide wrought-iron chandelier to sconces made with signed Tiffany glass.

Rycus, who has 20 years in the business prefers creating fixtures using antiques but said the real trend now is toward contemporary lines—often in glass and stainless steel.

His own home, a large manor on two acres in Orchard Lake, houses 16 of his creations. His works also hang in the Raleigh House, Ponchartrain Hotel, Vineyards and the Boca Raton Country Club in Florida.

WINNER OF THE 1961 Interior Design Award from the American Institute of Design. Rycus also was a recent finalist in a Resources Council competition. His entry was a chandelier using both candles and electric lighting.

Admittedly impulsive, Rycus said he likes to create designs around interesting items he's found on trips abroad or an



Mel Rycus, former mayor of Orchard Lake, designs a wide range of lighting fixtures.

tique hunting on vacations. Examples include a lamp the base of which is a target mechanism from a World War I man-of-war and a hanging fixture designed around an old stove pull-type handle.

He favors small bulbs and offers several "moon lights"—single Czechoslovakian globes illuminated by tiny flash-gun type bulbs. His shop also includes an unfinished piece using small bulbs behind a stainless steel screen.

But he said, "If someone wants to buy it like this, they can."

Rycus said he has a glass blowing studio at his home, but has not used it for his business.

His materials include glass, stainless steel, wood, iron, brass and tin. He uses imported crystal and gets raw materials from local distributors. He also does all the electrical wiring in his fixtures.

HE SAID his business has not been hit as hard as some others during the recession because "People are spending more time at home and they want decorations to reflect their personalities."

Offering custom fixtures, which he takes three to six months to complete, affords Rycus an economic edge. "I cater to an individual look in homes."

His shop's rear wall bears the motto "Our customers' imagination and pocketbook is our only limitation."

He said he hopes he is building a following of regular customers who buy his works, with signed one-of-a-kind pieces. He also does reproductions of antiques, such as works recently done for the Detroit Club and Music Hall.

Community-minded, Rycus said his long-time dream has been to have a shop in Orchard Lake. He is this year's West Bloomfield Michigan Week chairman and West Bloomfield's representative to an Oakland County schools committee. "I enjoy it out here," he said.



Rycus looks at the lamp he made from chromed wrought iron.



He points to a lamp that he made from an antique tool.



Troy's Design Center will have showroom space for furniture, antiques, accessories and wall coverings.

Furniture show room

Home center starts in Troy

Design Center, created as a regional focal point for the wholesale interior design, architectural, home furnishings and contract specification industries, is presently under construction in Troy. The first phase will be completed in late 1978.

The \$6-10 million Design Center complex will provide customized showroom space for furniture, antiques, accessories, lighting, wall coverings, floor coverings, fabrics, and related items.

Design Center will total 250,000 square feet in two building complexes. These are designed to house exhibit space and wholesale showrooms for the trade.

The first complex of the center will consist of 107,000 square feet when completed.

Construction will be in two phases. The larger area served by Design Center is populous and highly affluent. Within 100 miles of the site there are over 8 million people in Michigan, Ohio and Southern Ontario, including 75 percent of Michigan's total population.

Over four million people reside in the Detroit Standard Statistical area of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties. This area has a substantial potential for furniture spending with estimates placing it at \$600 million in 1975.

Design Center is being developed by Danto Investment Company of Birmingham. The firm is headed by Marvin J.

Danto, who founded the company in January, 1973 for the development and management of commercial and industrial real estate and related investments.

Danto has been involved in the decorative arts trade, both wholesale and retail for 30 years and has served as chairman and president of the National Home Furnishings Association as well as on the executive committee and board of directors of the Home Furnishings Council.

Architect for the Design Center complex is Robert B. Alpern Associates, Inc. of Birmingham. Planning Consultant is Villanovani & Associates, Inc. of Southfield, Michigan.

Icicles flood area homes

By CAROL HASKIN

After three months of snow melting to slush, then freezing to ice, area homes have come to resemble the palace of the Snow Queen.

The jungle of icicles hanging from eaves may have aesthetic qualities, but the frozen stalactites are causing problems for quite a few homeowners.

With ice clogging the eavestroughs, and roofs buried in ice and snow, the melting layer of ice underneath has nowhere to flow but through shingles and into the house.

Area hardware stores have been flooded with residents whose homes have sprung leaks in the recent aftermath.

THE ADVICE hardware people give to those seeking a way out of their watery dilemma is not always pleasant to hear. "I don't know what to tell them but take a hammer and chisel and chop the ice off," said Dave Busha of Meakill's in Birmingham.

An electrical cable that, when attached to the roof, heats up and prevents ice from forming, has become one of Meakill's most popular items.

However, the cable has to be put up in the fall, installing the cable now that the ice is so thick would only burn out the appliance, Busha said.

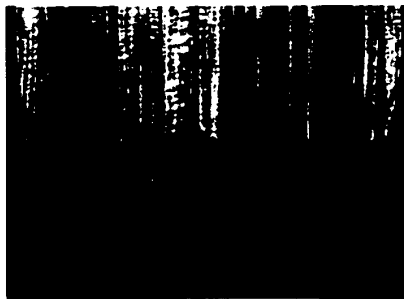
The cables cost from \$11 to \$33, depending on length.

SALESMEN AT Birmingham Lumber and Supply Co. agree that at this stage, the homeowner can do little but open a path for the water to flow off the roof.

A more drastic measure, one salesman said, would be to remove the eavestroughs, thereby allowing the water and ice sheets to slide off.

Sometimes the homeowner is forced into this alternative. When icicles get too large, their weight can easily rip eavestroughs from a home.

Bob Reynolds at Neighborhood Hardware suggested running a hose from the



Icicles look beautiful when they are frozen but the recent thaw has caused a series of floodings inside homes.

basement laundry tube to the roof and then taking hot water over the ice until it melts—or until the hot water runs out.

THIS MELTING process should also be accompanied by shoveling.

Reynolds said a chemical ice remover called X-2 pellets, and rock salt can help clear away the glaciers, if either of the preparations can be found.

It seems that although Detroit sits atop one of the world's largest salt mines, the metropolitan area has nearly run out of the seasoning for melting purposes thanks to January's record snowfall.

By the end of this week, Reynolds esti-

mated stores should have received another limited supply of the X-2 pellets.

EVERY OTHER customer coming in to Neighborhood Hardware this week came because of ice leaks, Reynolds said. And he can sympathize with the homeowners.

"We rained a whole ceding at home," he said. "It doesn't take long. Now we have to reshingle and rewire."

Over at Ace Hardware, dripping eavestroughs of this season's ice wars are stacking up on electrical tape for next year. Less than \$10 will buy 100 feet of the wired tape, guaranteed to keep the roof toasty warm—and inside walls dry—all winter.

Home of the future to be more efficient

As a recent seminar sponsored by the Maple Associates, Realtors, Robert J. Schmier, president of Abbey Homes, predicted that the home of the future will be smaller and more efficient.

Schmier said future homes will contain fewer but larger rooms which will serve more than one purpose. Another idea in new homes is the unified home, in which a portion of the house could be added on later.

Schmier also says that this single-family residence will always be around. A probable cause of the public's slow acceptance of the condominium is the objection to shared ownership of common walls with neighbors.

David V. Johnson, president of Maple Associates, also spoke at the seminar. Johnson discussed two major forms of real estate investing: apartment projects and "paper mall" shopping centers.

Johnson predicted government rent controls for apartments, and shopping centers large enough to service an entire region, as well as a gathering place for community functions.

He also forecast an increase of large corporations investing in real estate, such as the Chrysler Realty's Wakelee development. He cited vacant land as one of the slowest, and riskiest investments for the present, but emphasized that property, even with market fluctuations, can yield one of the highest rates of return as land appreciates in value.

CPAs offer income tax advice

By Samuel E. Vitale, President, The Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants

How do recent changes in the Michigan Income Tax laws affect you? The Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants offers the following comments on filing your 1975 Michigan income tax return.

You may obtain copies of tax forms and instructions through local offices of the Michigan Department of Treasury, post offices, banks and tax return preparers if you have not already received tax forms in the mail.

You should file a return for 1975 on or before April 15, 1976, if your federal adjusted gross income is greater than the total amount that you are al-

lowed for Michigan personal and dependency exemptions or if you are eligible for a refund. You may not have to file a federal return but still may be required to file a Michigan return.

For calendar 1975, the effective tax rate increased to 4.37 percent. The amount for each exemption remains at \$1,500. The homestead property tax credit is available again in this year to all homeowners and renters with special credit computations available to senior citizens and widows of senior citizens, servicemen, veterans, blind persons, paraplegics, quadriplegics, and totally and permanently disabled persons. If your credit exceeds your tax liability you may receive a refund up to a maximum of \$500.

The following forms are available for claiming this credit:

Senior citizens and widows of senior citizens: use MI-1040CR-1.

Serviceman, veteran, widow of serviceman or veteran, or blind person: use MI-1040CR-2.

Paraplegic or quadriplegic, totally and permanently disabled: use MI-1040CR-3.

Some claimants may qualify for credit tax return more than one category. They should compare and choose the one that works to their best advantage.

Some claimants may qualify for credit tax return more than one category. They should compare and choose the one that works to their best advantage.

The credit for homeowners and renters (general claims) equals 80 percent of the amount by which their property taxes exceed 3.5 percent of their household (i.e., spendable) in-

come. Renters will base their claim on 17 percent of rent paid which will be considered as taxes.

Persons living in a mobile home will use the rent paid for their lot. The Michigan Department of Treasury has added additional staff to assist you if you have any difficulty completing your claim.