

# With wreaths

# Turning over a new leaf

By Mary Klemio  
staff writer

Those who think wreaths are for Christmas time, and then only on doors and over fireplaces, may be surprised by a visit to Kay Mollanen's home.

Wreaths are in evidence at Mollanen's Livonia home year 'round, not only on the door and over the fireplace, but just about anywhere you could imagine as well. They're not just green and red, but every color of the spectrum.

"You can use any color combinations, for Christmas or all year," Mollanen said. "Your imagination can really play an important part of it."

FROM HER home, Mollanen teaches classes on how to make wreaths, centerpieces and other arrangements. She also prepares arrangements for custom orders, weddings and bazaars. Mollanen calls her business "Country Corners."

"Some people who take the classes say they're worried that their arrangements aren't going to look like mine," she said. "But I tell them, 'This isn't a production line.'"

Kay Mollanen, who teaches how to make wreaths, centerpieces and other arrangements in her home, adds more ribbon to another beautiful wreath (left). Her wreaths can hang almost anywhere, almost anytime of the year. This one features ribbons, flowers and Spanish moss.



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

"You cannot make a mistake with these. Everything can be moved or adjusted slightly," Mollanen continued. "About 19 out of 20 people who were worried about taking the class end up happy with what they make."

The popularity of wreaths around the home was rejuvenated with the American Bicentennial, according to Mollanen. She said wreaths were often displayed in homes in colonial times.

A VISITOR to the Mollanen home at any season is greeted with a colorful wreath at the front door.

"I keep a wreath on the front door all year," Mollanen said. "Silk flowers last a long time. So do plastic flowers. The sun doesn't bother them, and if they get wet, that doesn't bother them."

One wreath, with red and plaid ribbons circling a ring of baby's breath, hangs in Mollanen's red kitchen. At holiday time, she adds an angel ornament in the center of the wreath to give it a Christmas air.

Wreaths made of grapevine are popular, according to Mollanen. These wreaths can be dressed up with pine cones, plastic ornaments or flowers.

MOLLANEN LIKES to give a "country touch" to some wreaths by adding ribbons or such ornaments as cookie cutters. She has made a "kitchen wreath," one that bears little wooden utensils, raspberries and strawberries.

Wreaths can complement any type of furniture, Mollanen believes. She suggested that the color of the drapes and walls of a room be considered when deciding on the color of a wreath for that room.

Mollanen removes dust from her indoor wreaths by brushing them with a soft paint brush or shaking them. She keeps some wreaths out of direct sunlight so their ribbons and flowers won't fade.

Besides grapevines, Mollanen makes the bases for her wreaths out of wire, straw and Styrofoam.

Her largest wreaths measure between 2 1/2 and 3 feet across.

"It depends on the overall look," she said. "If the base is going to be covered, I might use Styrofoam or wire."

BABY'S BREATH and Spanish moss are two of the materials Mollanen adds to her wreaths. Glycerine added to baby's breath preserves it and keeps it soft.

Mollanen obtains her supplies from local wholesalers. She provides all the materials for her classes. Each session features one item and runs between two and three hours. Students pay a fee for each class, ranging from \$9 to \$30.

"People know that they can come here and make an entire arrangement at one session," Mollanen said.

Mollanen became interested in making wreaths and other arrangements some eight years ago, when she took a class in dried-flower arrangements.

"There was a six-month waiting list for one class," she recalled. "I attempted to teach my neighbors what I had learned. I started making my own ideas up and it grew from that."

NOW MOLLANEN keeps busy with her classes, held both in the morning and evening, and filling custom orders.

"It's all through word of mouth," she said. "I don't ever advertise."

Mollanen holds an open house in the fall and spring, at which she displays and sells samples of her work throughout her home.

"The idea is to show them in the setting you would make them for," she said.

For information on Country Corners, call 425-6103.

## 'Quest for Unity' at DIT

By Corinne Abelt  
staff writer

The "Quest for Unity" show at the Detroit Institute of Arts is likely to be the one you'll wish you'd gone to see.

Unlike the Matisse or Art Treasures of the Kremlin, it doesn't reach out and pull you into the museum by the sheer strength of the subject matter.

It's softer, gentler and decidedly more subtle in its approach. And it could be the title, "The Quest for Unity: American Art between the World's Fairs 1876-1893" is a bit wordy and not graphic enough. Maybe "March from Victoriana," "World, Here We Come" or "Growin' Up and Movin' Out" would have snagged them, but I doubt it. It's a difficult show to name because it has so many concurrent themes running through it.

It's not just one artist or one collection it's how American artists and tastemakers turned the corner just before the turn of the century and why.

The country was changing rapidly. It had just come through one of the most cor-

rupt periods of national leadership (U.S. Grant) which was to be followed by relatively incoherent administrations through the end of the century.

BUSINESS and industry were expanding at unbelievable speed championed by leaders such as Cornelius Vanderbilt, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, J.P. Morgan and Andrew W. Mellon.

The aesthetic tastes, so strongly influenced by the Victorian style at the beginning of the "Quest for Unity" period (1876) shifted by the end of that period (1893). As fascinating as anything in the show are the harbingers of what was to come. The signs and signals are all there if one cares to second guess the Victorians.

Whistler's "Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket" as well as the sketch for "Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Valparaiso Bay" certainly opened the door of the semi-abstract approach to nature.

The lovely cleveland tea set from the Chelsea Ceramics Arts Works with its strong geometrics and hammered molt surface seems more architectural than anything else. Seen for the first time during the 1876

Philadelphia exhibition, it must have shocked viewers who were accustomed to vining flowers and leaf designs, heavy with curves and ornate decoration.

PAINTER Elihu Vedder in his oil, "The Soul in Bondage," was already making the strong, linear statements that were later to be associated with Art Nouveau.

Still, viewers who don't want to play intellectual clue games, who just go for the pure aesthetic enjoyment will find much to occupy their eyes and minds.

While there are no weak places in the show and the paintings alone are worth the price of admission, the inclusion of some wonderful mosaics, exquisite fireplace screens and stained-glass windows by the great Louis Comfort Tiffany is, indeed, exciting. They're so beautiful, so opulent, it's no wonder the art of stained glass is once again popular. And the fact that they are from the Havemeyer House of Ann Arbor makes them even more relevant to Michigan viewers.

Makes one wonder what other architectural treasures are to be found close at hand.

## 'B & B' at Down Shop

Scandia Down Shop in Farmington Hills will showcase a new shipment of imported and domestic bed linens with a celebration Thursday, Oct. 27. "Bed and Breakfast" will be served 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and "Wine and Cheese" will be featured 4-7 p.m. The public is invited.

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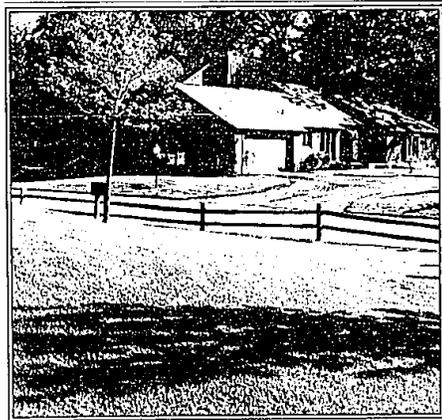
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