

Creative Living

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Symphony showhouse

Setting rivals that of TV's evening soaps

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

You expect to see Crystal Carrington coming down the wide stairway, Alexis Carrington in the lower level spa, about to unwrap her towel and step into the whirlpool bath, or Blake pouring himself a drink in the paneled library.

The Detroit Symphony Showhouse, which opens today, is their kind of living, beautiful, sumptuous, expensive.

But, for those who look beyond the elegance, there are all kinds of ideas to carry home, adapt and enjoy. That's the fun of a showhouse like this. At least 20 of the metropolitan area's interior design firms are putting best look forward in this 9,000-square-foot house in Heron Bay of Bloomfield Township.

Susan Currier of Birmingham, Showhouse chairwoman, said, "This is the only showhouse in the United States that builds a new house."

The builders for this one are Tom Alberts and Al Jokubaitis, Executive Square Building Corp. Care has been given to details large and small from the curve of the many gold faucets to the cut of the trim, patterns in the exterior brick work (Southerly of Utica).

CARL FREIWAUD of Perlmutter & Freiwald Inc. of Franklin coordinated the interior design so there is a flow of color and approach from one room to the next. He also did the foyer.

It was Freiwald who decided on ivory carpet and natural wood for the floors and the color groups that the designers used. All of this gives the Showhouse a refreshing continuity.

The house is situated on a 1 1/2-acre lot overlooking a ravine with large trees, so extensive decking is an integral part of the lifestyle the house suggests.

Since this is a French Chateau-style house, designed by Ronald E.

A view of the living room, done by Pierson Interiors of Troy, combines comfort, elegance, warmth and excitement. The color range is off-white, salmon, grays, taupes, black and touches of jade green. The breakfast nook at far right, furnished by Town & Country Interiors, is done in shades of green, burgundy and ivory-beige.

Staff photos by Jerry
Zolynsky

Mayotte of Mayotte & Associates of Troy, the interior has a decidedly continental atmosphere. And that seems to call for traditional and period furnishings, although there is enough of an eclectic spirit in evidence so those who like modern won't feel cheated, particularly on the lower level furnished by Carmody and Associates of Detroit.

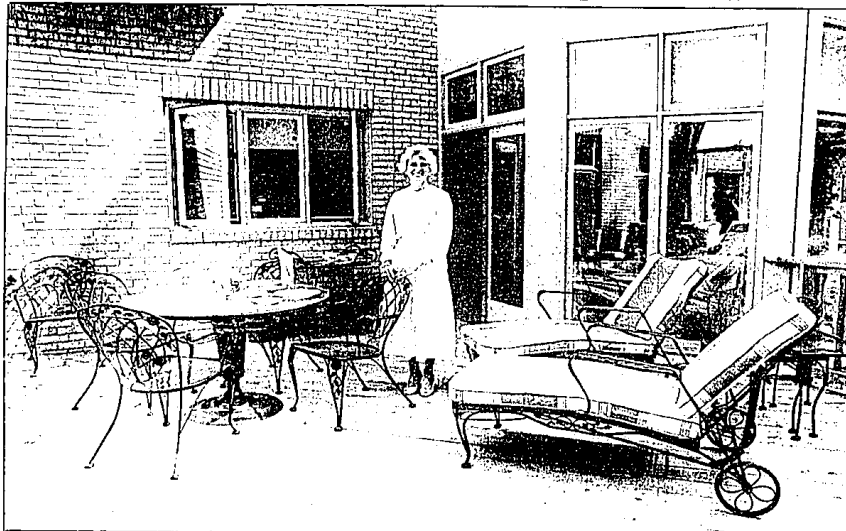
The 35-acre Huron Bay community, developed by David V. Johnson, president of Victor International Corp., was formerly part of the James Cousins and Leslie H. Green estates.

THE SHOWHOUSE will be open noon to 8 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. Sunday through June 28.

The weekly calendar of events includes: Tuesday — "Strawberry Delights," area chefs create a strawberry surprise for visitors; Wednesday — "Informal Fashion Fun," retailers lend designer fashions for the designer rooms; Thursday — "Floral Fantasy," florists fill the house with fresh flowers; Friday — "Designer Day," participating designers elaborate on design and function; Saturday — "Ask the Supplier," showhouse suppliers answer questions; and Sunday — "Sunday Musicals," symphony musicians provide live music.

Tickets, in advance through designers and CTC outlets, are \$6 or \$8 at the gatehouse.

Heron Bay is off of Club Drive, south of Square Lake, west of Telegraph, Bloomfield Township.



Susan Currier, Symphony Showhouse chairwoman, took a minute from a busy schedule the week before the house opened, to catch her breath on one of the many decks. This one, done by Englanders, is adjacent to the breakfast nook and sunroom.



Flowers hold special fascination for artist

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

"Celebration 1987," Mary Jane Bigler's show of watercolors and collages at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association, says a lot about what's going on there this year.

She and the BBA are both celebrating 30 years, the BBA as an entity and she as an instructor there. That makes her a vital part of the growth of the BBA and the art community at large.

Bigler can be seen in a number of ways — as an educator, a friend, a mother or, as she wants the world to see her at this moment, as an artist.

Facing the main gallery in which her 50 paintings were displayed, Bigler said she liked the way the show was hung.

"The real person is in these paintings. The spirit of that person comes out in the use of color and the dynamics of composition."

She said it is really in four parts — large flowers, small flowers, large collages and mini collages.

"The mini collages are a protest," she said, against the current fascination with huge paintings.

The influence of the years she spent in Rome and other parts of Italy is everywhere in her work. Most pervasive is the color.

"IT'S GIALLOSOA," she said, "yellow pink or yellow rose. It has to do with the color (in Italy) each evening at sundown."

And with that warm sundown shade, she couples yellows, oranges, greens, pinks and mauves, and the gallery seems to take on an inner glow from these colors.

But Italy is more than giallorosa at sundown for Bigler. It is ancient walls and arches and billboards and signs with the paper peeling away — leaving the past exposed in bits and pieces, parts of words and pictures, graphic hints of an interesting past.

Combining these with handmade papers, some of which are hers, rubbings and other memorabilia she creates collages that establish an intriguing present to past relationship that embodies exciting color, design and a sense of mystery.

The collages, large and small, like the flower paintings, are filled with contradictions, the paper shards attesting to the passage of time and how quickly an important event can disappear as the news of a new one is pasted over it. Yet, the walls and billboards remain.

THE FLOWERS (in vases she collects to use in her paintings) are her passion. She has spent a lifetime studying, seeing and painting them as an artist as well as a biologist. She paints from nature and shuns the use of picture books or photographs.

"The prettiness of flowers is what people usually paint, sort of a decorative thing. They don't get into the meaning. I look at them as having different characteristics like people . . . I think the fact that I'm basically



by a country girl contributes to that. I think that's why Italy, with all of its textures, appealed to me."

Her daughters, Jinni Bigler Thomas, an artist living in Albuquerque, N.M., and Detsy Bigler Watley of Chicago, and granddaughter, Elizabeth Frantz of Chicago, came for the opening last Friday.

Her exhibition continues through June 20.

Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 1516 S. Cranbrook, Birmingham.

Mary Jane Bigler says she will never tire of painting flowers because she goes beyond their prettiness, using them as metaphors for the fragility of life, in contrast to the enduring walls of Rome. At right is one of her favorite paintings in the show at Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association.

Staff photos by
Stephen Cantrell