

Designing around feathers

Artist begins her creations at the end of the hunting season

By Loraine McClah
staff writer

EVERY OCTOBER Marvel Steiger is ready with all of the material she's going to need to put together wreaths trimmed with the plumage of pheasants.

It will be a lot of silk, dried and colored materials she's gathered to complement the natural colors of the pheasant skins she receives, because they are all differ from one another, and because she never knows how

many she will have to work with after the hunting season.

Most of the materials she has in readiness for her creations are subtle in color because the colors of the game are elusive.

Depending on the light, the time of day, or even viewing the wreath from one angle or another, blues will turn to aquamarine, purples will change to red, rusts will change to gold or yellow.

"It all started when I was trying to find a gift for a boss who had everything," the Farmington Hills resident said.

dent said.

The boss she speaks of is Fred Wright, circulation manager for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, and her boss for 18 years.

"He's hunted big game in Africa and Alaska, and for as long as I can remember, every October, bird game in the Midwest," Steiger said.

"A few years ago he gave me some feathers to make myself a hat. I never did get the hat made. The feathers looked so beautiful against natural colored straw. Combining the two into a wreath seemed to be the per-

fect gift for him."

STEIGER HAS handcrafted jewelry, is a flower arranger, an accredited flower show judge, and creates miniature Christmas trees and flower arrangements for doll houses.

But whatever creative project she has going will stop from October to the end of the year now for her to put together her wreaths, designed around the pheasant skins or feathers.

"These are not Christmas wreaths. They are made to be used all year round. It just happens that they are made in the pre-Christmas season," she said.

"I sell all I make now through the owner of a boutique my sister introduced me to in Cleveland. But contracting for a given number, or a specific color, is just out of the question."

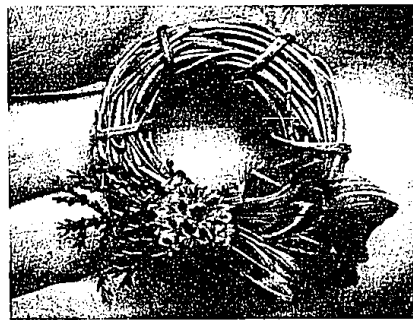
"Some of the birds are close to being alike, but never really alike, and besides I am not a production person. Each piece I get to work with is so beautiful on its own I take a lot of care with the ribbons, the dried materials, whatever trim I use with it," she said.

No matter what size the wreaths made for wall hangings to be sold, the owner of the shop in Cleveland always gets a couple of miniatures in the shipment.

"My favorite flower arrangements are always the miniatures. That's why I started making the miniatures for the doll houses, and I guess I'll never get away from them whatever I do," she said.

Steiger raised her four children in Farmington Hills and is employed as the Observer & Eccentric area circulation manager for Redford and the southern section of Livonia.

Staff photos
by
Randy Borst



The love and enjoyment of miniatures provoked artist Marvel Steiger to create the small wreath she holds in her hand (above) and the ornament for holiday tree or year-round hanging accessory.



Marvel Steiger shows one of the wreaths she made backed with a mirror. Most of her creations have an open back.

Tourists called to see the 'Best of China'

The Rev. T. Richard Marcis, a world traveler and pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Farmington Hills, is taking reservations now for a tour he'll lead that he calls "The Best of China."

The 15-day trip is scheduled for July 12-26 via Japan Airlines.

"My wife and I have been hosting tours since 1968," he said. "Over the past 20 years we have taken groups to Egypt, Israel, Greece and many

countries throughout Europe. Even so, China seemed to us a country in another world."

"Because relations between the U.S. and China have improved, opportunities to travel there safely is now a reality. What's more, it's also affordable."

The cost of the tour from San Francisco will be \$2,495 which includes all inland trips by private motorcoach, special events — such as

cultural entertainment and a Peking duck dinner — all admission fees, first class hotels and hotel taxes, portage, gratuities and the Chinese Visa. The price also includes three meals a day in China, and American breakfasts while in Hong Kong.

Tour stops will be made in Shanghai, Beijing, Xian, Gullin and Hong Kong.

MARCIS is also offering a couple

options.

Tourists can choose to extend their stay in the Orient for four days in Tokyo, or an additional four or eight days in Bangkok and Singapore.

"Both are offered at very reasonable rates," Marcis said. "But there must be a minimum of 10 signing up for either of these extensions. And since the number to join us will be limited, an early decision would be

appreciated."

Travel arrangements are made by Nawas International Travel, which pioneered Christian tours to the far corners of the world and has been in operation for 40 years.

A complete brochure detailing the tour will be sent on request by calling Marcis at his office during regular business hours at 553-3380, or at home, 661-0766.



The Rev. T. Richard Marcis

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