

Sample the newest in giftware

By Janice Tigar-Kramer
special writer

HOME ACCESSORIES, collectibles and knickknacks you won't mind dusting make thoughtful holiday gifts the entire family will enjoy year-round.

And this year, in spite of a sluggish economy, there's no end to the crop of handsome accessories, unusual collectibles and novelty gifts for the family room, play room and every place in-between.

The latest giftware — some fun, some sophisticated — was introduced to retail store buyers: the Michigan Association of Gift Salesmen (MAGS) in downtown Northville in January, about the time consumers were buying up leftover gift wrap at after-holiday sales.

"By September, store buyers have ordered the last of their holiday inventory," said Jim Mills, president of MAGS, a wholesale buying center that houses 89 gift and accessory showrooms.

Strictly off-limits to the public, MAGS carries the merchandise of close to 3,000 gift-makers worldwide and is Michigan's only permanent gift mart.

THIS YEAR, buyers may notice that some gift items are hard to find in small specialty stores, which in past years had healthy holiday inventories. That's because many small retailers delayed their holiday buying in the uncertain economy, allowing larger stores to buy up supplies of some gifts and collectibles from manufacturers early on, said Mills.

"If you find what you're looking for, buy early. You may not find it again in another store," he said.

What you'll find in the marketplace this year is classic and sophisticated giftware like Silvestri's oversized, crackle-glass vases. With or without cut or dried flowers, they reflect and play with natural light, adding sparkle and interest to any room or corner.



It's folk art with the look and quality of fine art. Ceramic animals and figurines by Shard Pottery are cast from original tin and pewter chocolate molds used at the turn-of-the-century. All figures and serving pieces are handpainted in a traditional cobalt glaze called spongeware. Pieces from the Victorianshire collection start at \$18.

space. Clear vases in classic shapes, 12 to 25 inches high, sell for \$125-\$300.

"An unusual home accessory makes a great holiday gift because it's something people probably wouldn't buy for themselves," said Leza Gjonaj, owner of Goldsmith Gallery in Northville. "Most accessories are used year-round, too."

When you're shopping, you'll also see Silvestri's Return to the Classics accessories in handsome woods like mahogany and burl veneer. The group includes small wood display cabinets, mirrors, decorative sun dials and accessory hook-boxes especially designed for eclectic interiors. The collection sells for \$44-\$135.

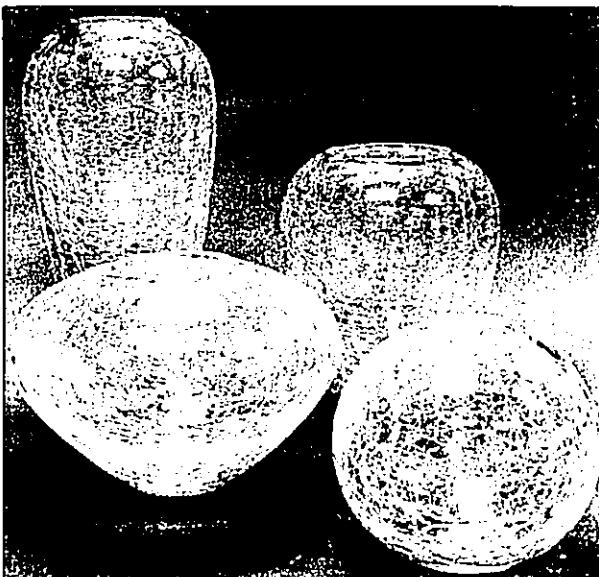
The Classics collection and crackle-glass vases are sold at Jacobson's Flowers in Birmingham, Goldsmith

Gallery in Northville and Aventura in Plymouth.

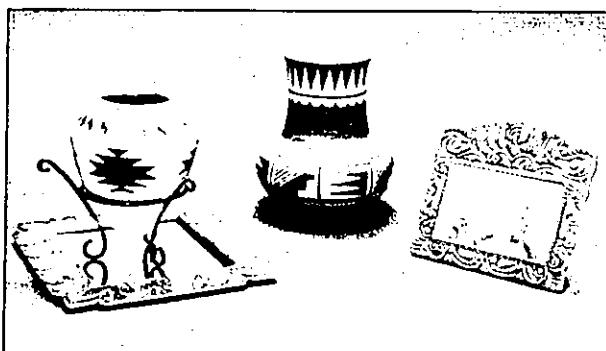
HARD TO believe, but nothing imitates the look of fine crystal like lucite desk accessories, picture frames, magazine stands and serving pieces by Grainware.

Sparkling, crystal-clear acrylic pieces created by designers like Pauline Trigere and Hubert Givenchy make stunning additions to traditional and contemporary interiors. Grainware lucite is available at Shades in

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These oversized, crackle vases from Silvestri outshine all others. With or without floral arrangements, these reflect natural light and add interest to any room or corner space. Vases are 12 to 25 inches high and sell for \$125-\$300.



Silvestri's Dakota collection, inspired by the Southwest, nature and native American art, includes classic pieces made of copper, bronze, hammered aluminum and clay. The collection of native American artistry sells for \$25-\$180.