

Malls & Mainstreets

The Farmington Observer

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Celebrate fall: This table-top centerpiece comes together with silk leaves, pumpkin and plastic corn from Michael's.

Harvest fun is decor theme

Orange, gold and autumn leaves; pumpkins and apple cider; the cool, crisp air; leaves crunching underfoot; and the smell of fireplaces being used once again.

I love everything about autumn—well, except that it leads to winter (slushy sidewalks, icy roads and bone-chilling temperatures I can live without).

If you've fallen for fall, too, and would like to bring some of the splendor of the season into your home, then here are some ideas.

Bed 'n' Stead, 470 Forest in Plymouth, has just about everything you could want to decorate your home for fall, including candles shaped like jack-o'-lanterns and multicolored-colored corn; pumpkins, apple- and cider-scented candles; kitchen towels with pumpkin and apple designs; dried flower wreaths, door and wall-hangings, seasonal doormats, woven throws and collectible knickknacks.

The store also carries hand-painted, ceramic tiles by artist Nancy DeYoung (\$26.99 each), and Boyds Bears merchandise (including boy and girl pilgrim costumes for stuffed bears to wear, \$8.99 each).

DeYoung's colorful tiles feature charming cartoon scenes of people enjoying the different months of the year. There is at least one tile for every month. One of the October tiles, for example, shows two people looking around a pumpkin patch and the month is printed at the top.

Countryside Craft Mall & Antiques has the largest selection of fall and Halloween home-decorating merchandise that I've seen. I visited the one on Plymouth Road, between Wayne and Levan in Livonia, but Countryside also has locations in Walled Lake, Sterling Heights and Flint. Each of the locations has about 300 vendors, and they may lease booths for six or 12 months at a time, said Andy Rodgers, manager of the Livonia location.

I found stand-alone fabric statues about 3-feet tall, made to look like good and evil witches or little kids in ghost costumes (\$17.95 and up). Put them by your front door on Halloween night and let your neighbors try to guess who's under the costume.

I also found large potpourri holders that look like real apple pies. Put one of them in your heated oven for a few minutes and the aroma of freshly baked apple pie will fill your kitchen. (Perfect if you're trying to sell your house, but bad if someone in your family thinks there's a real pie to be had and wants a piece of it!)

The "pies" come in bakery boxes, from \$5. Aisle after aisle, Countryside had all sorts of fall items from candles, to dried flower wreaths, to baskets and clay pots, decorative flags, porch duck outfits, clothing and jewelry—the list could go on and on. Of course, the merchandise may vary from location to location.

Finally, if you'd like to make some fall decorations yourself, try a craft store. I found decorative scarecrows (table-top to tall-as-silk) and autumn leaves, a ceramic cornucopia, plastic pumpkins and all kinds of neat stuff at the Michael's in Farmington, Novi and Westland.

Whatever you do, enjoy fall while it lasts. Winter will be here soon enough.

Saks Fifth Avenue

Expansion to improve business

A new and improved Saks Fifth Avenue is evolving at Somerset Collection South as the couture retailer positions itself for the 21st century shopper.

By SUSAN DEMAGGIO

When the 30-year-old Saks Fifth Avenue store at Somerset Collection South in Troy completes renovations next September, customers will feel they're shopping inside an elegant mansion.

Plans call for wider aisles, sumptuous fitting rooms, gracious entries, several fireplaces, a state-of-the-art beauty salon and spa, health food cafe, a gift shop for the home, and all new fixtures, lighting and cabinetry.

The store will be enlarged by 40,000 square feet and a tri-level parking deck with 410 spaces will be added to the back side.

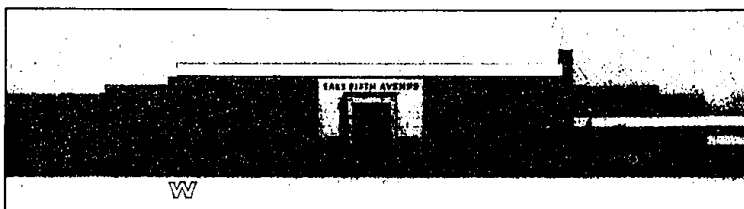
"We've been working on these plans for three years," said Kim Nye, store manager since 1980. "It's a whole new Saks exuding feelings of luxury and elegance."

Nye said the changes put Saks Fifth Avenue in a position to rival competitor Neiman Marcus for the high-end customer. A "battle" going on in many markets where the two luxury retailers woo the wealthy.

"We have very loyal customers, many of whom have shopped Saks Fifth Avenue since the Grand Boulevard store opened in 1936," Nye said. "Soon we hope to offer them the most beautiful store in one of the prettiest malls in the country."

Nye said since Saks Fifth Avenue went public in 1996, many changes have taken place.

"Locally, we'll open an Off 5th (clearance) store at the Great Lakes Crossing outlet center in Auburn



Modern facade: Saks Fifth Avenue at the Somerset Collection South in Troy, is adding 40,000 more square feet of retail space, a tri-level parking deck (far right), a health food cafe and a state-of-the-art beauty spa/salon to keep pace with the luxurious offerings at the rest of the mall. This view from Coolidge, features iron grating above the marbled entrance.

Hills, and at the Fairlane Town Center Store in Dearborn, where merchandise is being consolidated on the first level to create an Off 5th store on Level Two."

In 1967, Saks Fifth Avenue was the first store to open in the cornfield that is now the retail mecca known as The Somerset Collection. It was the place to go for merchandise by Chanel, Armani, St. John and Oscar de la Renta.

"We try to offer assortments that are a quality above what other stores present to be more special to our customers," Nye explained. "That's why I'm so excited about our changes. We'll have so much more room to present more extensive collections from designers. Our coat department will have the best selections in the city with room enough to see it all and try it on in elegant surroundings."

Increased visibility

Nye said all the store walls will come down in January when the guts of the remodel begins, heading toward a Sept. 1, 1998 grand reopening. The elevators now in the center of the store, will be moved to encourage people to use the escalators at the far ends.

Last week, the entire Saks Fifth Avenue Men's Department was moved down the mall into the former Barney's New York space to make room for initial changes. The men's department, a success story in its own right, will remain there through the holidays.

In the new Saks, look for the entire sportswear collection to be housed on the second level along with

evening wear. The store plans to become the area's "Petites Headquarters," expanding its petite assortments. Fitting rooms in all departments will be enlarged and upgraded with personal amenities. Fireplaces will be added in Men's and the Fifth Avenue Club, where many customers shop in privacy.

Level One luxury

On the main floor, cosmetics will triple in size, jewelry will double in size, and handbags and accessories will become a row of individual designer boutiques with new vendors added to the present roster of who's who. The women's shoe department will triple in size and also set down on the main floor.

The third floor will house the spa/salon offering state-of-the-art surroundings for massages, skin treatments and hair services. Negotiations are under way to feature Yves Saint Laurent products, exclusively in the spa.

Cafe Citron will seat 20, have a juice bar, and prepare "gourmet health foods" in an intimate setting.

"The new store is being designed by a team that just finished the Houston Galleria and Saks Fifth Avenue's San Francisco Men's Store which opened to rave reviews," said Nye. "This store will take us a notch above our competition on all levels."

Nye said her team got the go-ahead to proceed with the modernization because store sales figures remained strong through the opening of Somerset North, and through the five years following the debut of Neiman Marcus at the other end of the shopping center.



How well do you know Saks Fifth Avenue?



Saks Fifth Avenue is a remarkable company with a fascinating history. For 70 years, Saks has been at the forefront of the fashion industry.

The following questions test your knowledge of its rich past. You may be surprised by some of the answers. Have fun!

1. Saks Fifth Avenue was founded by what two families?

- a. Saks and Macys
- b. Saks and Helmsleys
- c. Saks and Gimbel
- d. Saks and Tiffanys

2. The merger of these two retail families took place on a New York to New Jersey commuter train. The deal was signed in a baggage car on:

- a. a stack of New York Times
- b. a crate of Florida oranges
- c. the top of an empty coffin
- d. a carton of Miss Prindable apples

3. In 1924, their first store was built in New York on the corner of:

- a. 50th and Fifth Avenue
- b. 50th and 49th
- c. Riverside Drive and 96th street

4. Saks first delivery was:

- a. a silver hip flask to W.C. Fields
- b. a red sequin dress to Mae West
- c. a silk top hat to President Coolidge
- d. a carton of Florentine lace cookies to Spanky McFarland

5. During the first year, Saks Fifth Avenue established how many charge account customers?

- a. 8
- b. 500
- c. 5,000
- d. 50,000

6. Saks' very first "best seller" was:

- a. a flapper dress
- b. a silver hip flask
- c. a bottle of Chanel perfume
- d. a Grosrad Wonder bra

7. In 1926, Saks Fifth Avenue opened its first resort store in:

- a. Palm Beach
- b. Palm Springs
- c. Bermuda
- d. Anchorage

8. In the 1940s, Adam Gimbel sup-

ported the war effort by:

- a. opening an Army/Navy uniform shop on the 6th floor of the New York store
- b. sponsoring courses in first aid, air raid maneuvers and bandage rolling
- c. selling a full line of women's Civilian Defense uniforms
- d. all of the above

9. In the 1960s, Saks discovered fashion creators: (circle all that apply).

- a. Adolfo
- b. Oscar de la Renta
- c. Anne Klein
- d. Donna Karan

10. Today, Saks Fifth Avenue is owned by:

- a. the store managers
- b. Investorcorp, an international group of independent investors
- c. General Foods International
- d. Ross Perot

Answers: 1C, 2C, 3A, 4C, 5D, 6B, 7A, 8D, 9A,B,C, 10B.

Retail History

1867: Andrew Saks opened a men's clothing store in Washington, D.C.

1902: Andrew Saks opened his first specialty store in New York City near Herald Square.

1923: Horace Saks assumed the presidency of Saks and Co. when his father passed away.

1924: Saks Fifth Avenue was founded by Horace Saks and Bernard Gimbel. A flagship store in New York City officially opened on Sept. 15.

1926: Palm Beach, the first branch store, opened.

1973: Saks Fifth Avenue was acquired by London-based B.A.T. Industries, p.l.c.

1987: The company launched a five-year, \$300 million program to expand and modernize its stores.

1990: Saks Fifth Avenue was purchased from B.A.T. by Investorcorp, an international investor group.

1990: Franklin Mills, Saks' first outlet store (OFF 5th) opened.

1996: Saks Fifth Avenue acquired four I. Magnin locations on the west coast and doubled the number of OFF 5th locations.

1996: Saks has 50 stores, 30 OFF 5th locations, two distribution centers, one credit center and one data center. On May 22, Saks Fifth Avenue became a publicly-traded company on the New York Stock Exchange.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

(313) 593-1370.

SUNDAY, OCT. 12

Chili Cook-Off

Downtown Plymouth merchants hosts 2nd annual Chili Cook-Off with Harley Davidson Bike Show, Live Country Entertainment, Line Dancing. 10k run begins at 10 a.m. 50 Beanie Baby raffle. First prize chili cook receives \$500. Proceeds to Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Kellogg Park, Ann Arbor Trail/Main. (313) 455-8838.

Classical cafe

Borders hosts Birmingham Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra conductor Felix Rensick playing CD samples of the classics 1 p.m. Members of the symphony will accompany him. A Classical Kids presentation at 2 p.m. Raffle for upcoming BBSO tickets. Free events.

Borders. 34300 Woodward, Birmingham. (248) 203-0005.

Pumpkin painting party

Frank's Nursery and Craft stores host a fall fun party for kids noon to 4 p.m. at all locations. Each child receives one free pumpkin and paint set. Cider and donuts will be served. The store stocks carving kits, fresh pumpkins, plastic Halloween figures to paint, and materials to make seasonal wreaths. (313) 366-8400.

News of special events for shoppers is included in this calendar. Send information to: Malls & Mainstreets, c/o The Observer & Eccentric, 805 East Maple, 48009; or fax (248) 844-1314. Deadline: Wednesday 5 p.m. for publication on Sunday.

MONDAY, OCT. 6

Monday Night Football

Lions place kicker Jason Hanson signs autographs from 6-8 p.m. in the H-Court area of the mall. Event tickets are \$4 available at Pitch, Hit and Run. Livonia Mall, Seven Mile/Middlebelt. (248) 474-4266.

TUESDAY, OCT. 7

Mail job fair

Two Livonia malls (Wonderland Mall at Plymouth/Middlebelt and Laurel Park Place at Six Mile/Newburgh) seek holiday help and beyond, noon to 4 p.m. accepting resumes and holding interviews in their center courts. More than 1,000 retail positions are open according to mail officials. After the event, the malls will post updated job listings at the information booths.

Fair hotline (810) 293-7800.

Farmers' Market last weeks

Both downtown Plymouth and Farmington offer fresh produce, bakery goods, flowers and herbs, plus much more through Oct. 25. Hot coffee and cold lemonade in Plymouth's gathering across from Kellogg Park.

Plymouth, Ann Arbor Trail/Main.

(313) 453-1540. Farmington, Grand River/east of Farmington.

Fall Festival

Four Seasons Garden Center hosts 4th annual event celebrating the garden and harvest from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Oct. 12. Lectures, demonstrations, crafts. Call for details.

14471 West Eleven Mile, Oak Park. (248) 543-4400.

Barbie Show and Sale

Barbie expert Norita Bergman of Troy offers free Barbie appraisals in center court. The mall commons are lined with Barbie collectors and dealers selling dolls and accessories from the past and present. Many holiday gift ideas.

Meadowbrook Village Mall, Adams/Walton.

Rochester Hills. (248) 375-9451.

Family Fun

Moistic Youth Theater, founded in 1992 and starring talented youth from metro-Detroit, perform songs and vignettes at 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. in the mall's Fountain Court. Free, part of mall's October Saturday's Family FunCentral series. Series also includes morning breakfast and movie, tap dancing lessons through Oct. 25: 1 p.m. (6-8 year-olds) 2 p.m. (9-14 year-olds) 3 p.m. (all others) on mall's lower level near Hudson's. Arts & Crafts project on lower level near Lord & Taylor Court.

Fairlane Town Center, Michigan/Southfield Fwy.