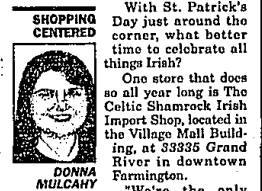


Why not shop Irish for St. Pat's Day?



DONNA MULCAHY

With St. Patrick's Day just around the corner, what better time to celebrate all things Irish?

One store that does so all year long is The Celtic Shamrock Irish Import Shop, located in the Village Mall Building, at 3335 Grand River in downtown Farmington.

"We're the only independently owned Irish import shop in metro Detroit," said Barbara Horrigan-Goins, who owns the shop with her husband, Wally Goins and business partner, Doris Ryan.

Sure, you can find fun things there, like "Kiss Me I'm Irish" pins, mouse pads, t-shirts and mugs. But the store also carries a plethora of other Irish items, including jewelry, books, music, perfume, house wares, religious items, art and beautiful wool sweaters. Most of the store's items are Irish imports. The rest are from Irish-American owned companies.

Horrigan-Goins and her husband travel to Ireland once a year to find new and unique merchandise for their shop and to keep abreast of what's popular there.

When asked by customers who plan to visit Ireland, the couple offers advice on sleeping accommodations, sightseeing and other cultural activities.

"I'm very proud to be Irish and to share the culture and history with anybody who wants to learn more about it," Horrigan-Goins said.

The Celtic Shamrock (pronounced Kel-tic), which opened in 1995 in Milford, moved to its current location in 1996.

In May, the shop expects to begin offering a bridal registry service. In August, the store will begin taking orders for custom-made christening gowns that bear a family coat of arms on the skirt.

Also, customers can view and order merchandise from the shop's on-line catalog at www.celticshamrock.com. I found the site, which contains about 50 percent of the shop's offerings.

Store hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday. Customers may also call (888) 672-7238.

But let's not forget two famous Irish imports - Waterford crystal and Belleek china, both of which are available at Hudson's stores.

Waterford, a company known for its high quality hand-cut designs, offers a series of toasting flutes called the Millennium Collection. This year, the line has been expanded to include a champagne cooler and crystal wine bottle coaster. The flutes are \$115 per pair, and this year's design is called the Peace Flute.

Also, Waterford recently introduced a new line of crystal, featuring contemporary shapes and minimal cuts designed by John Rocha, a fashion designer well known in Europe and Ireland.

Another benefit of purchasing Waterford crystal is that the company never discontinues a pattern and allows customers to annually order replacement pieces.

Belleek has always offered specialty dinner pieces, but this year will tender complete sets. The pieces are made of bone china in white and have a woven basket design.

Known for hand-painted and collectible pieces, Belleek also sells other home pieces in these seven designs: Claddagh, Shamrock, Serenity, Enchanted Garden, Winter Rose, Country Trellis and Daisy.

French flair
Savior Faire offers one-of-a-kind treasures



Elegance and repose: Savior Faire co-owners (from left) Karin Abel and Thomas Lotarski recline on some of the luxurious furniture they sell out of their Birmingham store. Abel relaxes on a 1920s French style love seat with an array of fine collector's dolls while Lotarski, her father, sits on an 100-year-old iron bed from France.

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
SPECIAL EDITOR
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A step inside Savior Faire, a relatively new downtown Birmingham store, is a step back in time and into the exquisite lifestyle of the erstwhile French bourgeoisie class.

At present, the store even has on display four garden chairs from a royal chateau that was located in Vichy, France.

Owned and used by relatives of King Louis' family, each chair bears the carved initials of the royal name. Savior Faire's selling price for a set of four of the chairs is \$4,500, but the store carries similar French treasures for smaller pocketbooks.

On a large, antique wood table is a French gilt metal candle holder and jardiniere for plants and flowers. Between 100 and 125 years old, the glass and metal piece is priced at \$450. Beside it is a circa 1900 "Globe Du Marriage," a memento display of a bride's head piece. The traditional bridal keepsake - a very unusual piece - is priced at \$825.

"The French really enjoy being surrounded by beauty," said the store's co-owner Karin Abel, who travels to France at least twice a year. "It's an important factor in their way of life. We're much more fast-paced and impulsive. We don't take time to enjoy the beautiful things around us," she said.

Yet, there is a recent movement toward beautifying the home in this country, said Abel, a graduate of the Center for Creative Studies who fell in love with the elegant design, flowing curves and detailed artistry of French furniture while on vacation in Europe.

"People are becoming very home-centered," she said. "There's a turnaround coming about. All that from the '80s - the me and the shopping, the cars and the clothes - I think people are starting to slow down and realize we might as well enjoy our lives a little more."

So, Abel, who co-owns the store along with her father, Thomas Lotarski, hopes the treasures she discovers in France not only appeal to her customers but also bring character, charm and beauty into their lives.

While the store, located at 1157 South Adams, specializes in French antique furniture, Abel and her father also sell French-style replica pieces and other unique home accessories.

At present, Abel is showing an unusual line of decorative finials and door knobs. Hand-painted and bedecked with jewels, the wooden hardware sells for between \$20 and \$55.

Used on a cabinet door or drapery rod, the pieces not only would be indicative of French style - detail, detail and more detail - but also brighten and bring color to drab interior spaces, said Abel. "They also make a perfect housewarming gift," she said.

Since the store's inventory of modern pieces will never be the same - once a replica line sells out, Abel won't replace it - making uncommon and one-of-a-kind purchases at Savior Faire will be the rule rather than the exception.

Best of all, Abel has a customer wish list and keeps an eye out for desired furniture and accessories while on buying trips in France. Housewares of general interest are generally purchased and bring back to the United States. And, if you're looking for a particularly unusual French object, she'll fax a polaroid of the item.

Savior Faire is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., or by appointment. Call (248) 644-0560.

Sought-after Tae-Bo videos available at local retailers

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
SPECIAL EDITOR

In beauty salons, exercise studios and clothing stores the talk these days is about Tae-Bo, a relatively new fitness program that melds taekwondo, dance, aerobics and kickboxing.

And, the question on everyone's mind is: Where and how can one of the four official Tae-Bo fitness videos be obtained?

Contrary to popular opinion, Tae-Bo exercise videos can be purchased first-hand at local retail stores and not only by phone, mail order or purchase through the Internet.

The tapes have primarily been marketed on television infomercials, which include a toll-free number and address for ordering.

In Michigan, the As Seen On TV store in the Great Lakes Crossing mall in Auburn Hills and local Target stores are currently selling a two-tape package.

The package retails for \$39.99 at As Seen On TV and includes the 40-minute instructional video, 27-minute basic workout tape and an insert for the eight-minute fitness video, all of which are from the Tae-Bo video library advertised on television.

"We have run out, but we got them back in," said Christine Linemann, manager at As Seen On TV.

Not only is the video package the vendor's hottest selling item at the moment, but customers reserve and pay for copies in advance of new shipments, said Linemann.

"Everybody wants it. I have to go through the whole story of Tae-Bo every day," she said.

Target, which considers the video package one of its best-selling fitness products, offers the same two-tapes for \$34.99 and has stores in Rochester Hills, Waterford, Southfield, Farmington Hills, Canton and Westland.

As Seen On TV has been carrying the videos since the Christmas shopping season and expects to stock the shelves with the fourth Tae-Bo fitness tape, an advanced-level program, sometime in May.

Full, four-tape sets are still available for purchase by phone ((1-800-880-6702) or through the Internet (www.taebotv.com) at a cost of \$68.95, which includes shipping and handling. The Tae-Bo web site also provides a plethora of information about the tape series, including a profile of Tae-Bo creator Billy Blanks and video clips of Tae-Bo classes.

News of special events for shoppers is included in this calendar. Send information to: Malls & Mainstreets, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 East Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009; or fax (248) 644-1314. Deadline: Wednesday 5 p.m. for publication on Sunday.

SUNDAY, MARCH 14

CLEAN YOUR CLOSET
Celebrating national "Clean Your Closet Week," Art Van Furniture stores are accepting donations of used women's business attire through March 21. Clothing will be given to women who are re-entering the workforce. For additional information, see co-sponsor WJDK-Fox 2's web site at www.fox2detroit.com

TUESDAY, MARCH 16

PROJECT HEALTH-PRAMA
Free and low cost health screenings and services will be provided through March 17 at Laurel Park Place Mall in Livonia. For additional information, call

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

(248) 424-8600.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17

OSCAR FOR SPRING
Snags Fifth Avenue, Somerset Collection in Troy, presents Oscar De La Renta's spring 1999 special order collection through March 18. 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Designer Salon, second floor.

THURSDAY, MARCH 18

TRUNK SHOW
The Peppertree, at 302 Walnut Blvd. in downtown Rochester, presents a trunk show featuring new Geiger collections and Judith Jack jewelry. 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Call (248) 652-1225.

SKIN CARE SPEAKER
From 1-3 p.m., Dr. Gregory Brown, a plastic surgeon will talk about the use of bioengineered molecules to reverse aging effects, a concept he developed and his skin care products. Neiman Marcus, Somerset Collection in Troy, Cosmetics, first floor. Call (248) 643-3300, ext. 2107, for appointment.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20

BRIDE STYLE
Gowns, hair styles, make-up and accessories for the bride will be showcased 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Figaro beauty salon, at 265 N. Old Woodward in downtown Birmingham.

BRIONI TRUNK SHOW
View the 1999 spring stock and custom swatch collection, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Neiman Marcus, Somerset Collection in Troy. The Man's Store, first floor.

Irish beauty: Waterford's crystal toasting flutes sell for \$115 a pair at Hudson's stores.