



Tree-trimming to the extreme

Host of ideas on display at Festival of Trees

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
STAFF WRITER

Anything tallies as holiday trim at Festival of Trees.

Opening Sunday, Nov. 24, the annual sale and display of Christmas trees draws a flock of tree designers, among them many professional decorators. With them - all volunteers - comes a morass of ingenious and sometimes wacky takes on Christmas tree ornamentation.

Try these past tree themes on for size: lasagna noodles, kitchen gadgets, pink flamingos, dancing bears in tutus, the

Farmington. All purchases include home delivery, and trees sell for between \$150 and \$3,000. First pick goes to those who attend the event's Gala Preview Party and auction, 6-10 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 23.

Osborne's creation this year is a 9-foot tree trimmed in red, purple and chartreuse Parisian clowns called *Les Pitres de Paris* or *The Clowns of Paris*. "It's very different from the trees I've done thus far. The colors are not typical Christmas, but they are jewel-toned, which lends itself to Christmas."

EVER SO GREEN

In contrast, Denise Murray, a volunteer from Bloomfield Township, and five friends came up with a Christmas tree with extra green time. Among the trims on their evergreen, entitled *A Golfer's Dream*, are Michigan golf packages worth more than \$1,000.

"We have golf balls made into ornaments with ribbons, clear glass ornaments with red, white and green trees inside, beaded garlands with miniature golf balls with white tees hanging down like icicles," Murray described the tree.

"Some of the golfers - actually they're big-time golfers. We were just brainstorming and somehow thought 'How about a golf tree?'"

A CHILDREN'S SEASON

Meanwhile, Kralowski is still planning his contribution: a traditional five-piece vignette consisting of tree, wreath, mantle piece, hearth swag and cen-



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC

Maureen Osborne (right) and her mother, Marilyn Wagner, have been working on *The Clowns of Paris*, a 9-foot evergreen decorated with jewel-toned Parisian clowns, since April.

terpiece. "It has a mouse theme, *To Grandma Mousie We Go*," he said.

Also ideal for younger visitors is The Expo Design Center's story display complete with a 14-foot storybook.

But perhaps one of the most fitting trees is Children's Hospital's own, *Teddy Bear Hospital*, with real interns and residents conducting mini-exams for kids as a way to alleviate common fears about illness and medicine.

"All of the Santa and children's events are interspersed throughout the tree displays," added Kralowski.

"We've combined everything. It's one big festival. We wanted to keep the parents more with the kids."

nklemic@oehomecomm.net | (248) 901-2567

FESTIVAL OF TREES

What: A public display of more than 100 professionally designed holiday trees, vignettes, gingerbread houses and wreaths to benefit Children's Hospital of Michigan.

When: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Nov. 24, 29 and 30; 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nov. 25; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Nov. 26-27 and Dec. 1. Gala Preview Party is scheduled 6-10 p.m. Nov. 23.

Where: Cobo Center, 301 Civic Center Drive, Detroit.

Tickets: Show admission is \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$4 for ages 2-12 and free for under age 2.

Advance tickets are \$1 less. Gala Preview Party tickets are \$150, \$200 or \$250. Call (313) 745-0778 or visit the Festival of Trees Web site at www.fot.org.

Additional festival events:

■ Lunch with Santa, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Nov. 30, advance tickets required, \$15 for adults, \$10 for children and free for under age 2.

Accents

Touch of toile

You see toile everywhere - on wallpaper, curtains and upholstery. How about on a wastebasket?

Karen Thompson, a designer with Home Depot, explains how to make a toile wastebasket yourself.

You'll need pencil, scissors, sandpaper, hot glue gun, plastic wastebasket, wallpaper, clear-drying adhesive, black vinyl electrical bundling tape that is 2 inches wide, and decorative trim.

1. Wrap wastebasket with wallpaper, centering the pattern on the opposite side of the seam.

Mark the back of the paper to the height of the basket plus a 1/4-inch overlap for the bottom and a 2-inch overlap at the seam. Cut paper to size.

2. Lightly sand the wastebasket along seam area and bottom edges.

3. Using clear-drying adhesive, glue down one edge of the wallpaper to the sanded seam.

Wrap the paper around the basket, gluing along top and bottom edges as you go.

4. Glue down seam overlap. Let dry.

5. Cut slits in the bottom overlap at 2-inch intervals, then glue down the pieces, ensuring the bottom is flat.

6. Center black tape on the top edge of wastebasket, then roll out and press down firmly along inside and outside edges. Make a neat seam.

7. Using a hot glue gun, attach decorative trim over electrical tape.

Designing Men

Do you know a guy who takes over the home when it comes time to decorate for the holidays?

We're looking for those creative and confident men out there who love to deck the halls - and not just with lights - come the Christmas season. We're looking to feature a few of these designing men in an upcoming feature story.

Please let us know by contacting Nicole Stafford, At Home writer, by email at nstafford@oehomecomm.net or by mail at Eccentric Newspapers, 805 East Maple, Birmingham, Mich. 48009 or by phone at (248) 901-2567.



This year's Festival of Trees will open Nov. 24, with a Gala Preview Party Nov. 23.

contents of the stomach of *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*. One of this year's known standards in the quirky category - many designers keep their plans under wraps - is a garden-themed evergreen complete with wrap-around-the-tree garden hose.

"Nowadays, you can put anything on a tree and tie it in," said Larry Kralowski, a Livonia resident and executive director of Festival of Trees. "Anything goes."

TRADITIONAL WITH A TWIST

Many, if not most, of the more than 100 trimmed trees, wreaths and other decorative pieces, however, stay within the bounds of normal. That's because everything on display is for sale with proceeds benefiting Children's Hospital of Michigan.

"The bottom line is we want our trees to sell, so we don't want them to go overboard, but to be different and interesting," said Maureen Osborne, a Festival of Trees board member and tree designer who lives in



Parisian clowns in red, purple and chartreuse adorn Maureen Osborne's display tree.

Plymouth holiday home tour features historic residences

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
STAFF WRITER

The Plymouth Symphony League's holiday home tour blends holiday decorations, Christmas traditions and historic homes.

It's no wonder the annual event draws 1,000 attendees. Scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 24, this year's driving tour features four Plymouth and two Northville houses.

As in past years, historic residences headline the tour.

"Homes are chosen for historical significance, architectural design and decor," said K.C.

Mueller, a tour event organizer and chair of the league's spring home tour. "People love to go looking at houses, but instead of looking at new models, they're looking at older and historic homes that have been beautifully maintained."

Among the Plymouth residences featured on the tour is the circa 1895 Penniman White House, which appeared in the same tour in 1996. Located on the north side of Penniman Avenue, east of Auburn, the home is currently the Rectory for Our Lady of Good Counsel Church. It will be transformed for the holidays with jewel-

toned trimmings by Dearborn Heights interior designer Mark Fox. Keep an eye out for Saint Nick, though; Father John's Santa collection will be among the holiday embellishments there.

Another highlight: The bed and breakfast inn with wrap-around porch, large bay windows and carriage house suites at 932 Penniman Ave. in Plymouth. The almost-100-year-old home's planned decor has been dubbed "A Victorian Christmas" and features a nine-foot-tall Christmas tree in the old-fashioned front parlor.

"It's fun to see how different



Among the six houses on the Plymouth Symphony League's holiday home tour is an almost 100-year-old Plymouth residence that is now a bed and breakfast inn. Holiday decorations, dubbed "A Victorian Christmas," feature a 9-foot Christmas tree in the old-fashioned front parlor.

people do different decorations," said Mueller.

"The homes are chosen because they are very interesting homes in their own right,

but the home and the decorations together are what people are really looking to see."

nstafford@oehomecomm.net | (248) 901-2567

Been surfing lately?

Wait until you see what's on our website—grab your mouse and check it out!
www.observerandeccentric.com