

At Home

INTERIOR DESIGN • DIY • GARDENING

Homeward bound

Hamilton statue finds a home.

C4

Accents

Ultimate spa search

Is your bathroom a private retreat equipped with the latest home spa gadgets and best in aromatherapeutic goodies? Do you have a friend or neighbor whose spa bathroom is so resplendent you wish you could book an appointment?

We're in search of the ultimate at-home spa for an upcoming feature. Let us know by contacting Nicole Stafford, At Home writer, by phone at (248) 901-2567 or e-mail at nstafford@oe.homecomm.net. See you at the spa!

On the wild side

The National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife Habitat™ program will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2003.

Creating a habitat is most often a gradual process, with homeowners doing a little bit each month or year. Various kinds of wildlife may come to call at any point along the way. To help nature enthusiasts with their habitats, the NWF will prepare a habitat tip every month during its year-long anniversary celebration.

For more information on how to make your property attractive to wildlife, and how you can get your yard certified by the NWF as an official Backyard Wildlife Habitat site, visit www.nwf.org/backyard-wildlifehabitat.

The NWF's tip for January gives guidance on the best bird feeding techniques:

Provide multiple feeding stations in different areas of your yard to disperse bird activity and avoid crowding at the feeder. (Crowding can cause birds stress, making them vulnerable to disease.) Be sure to feed in moderation with only a few feeders per acre. Clean your feeders regularly with hot water, and let them air dry completely. Keep areas under and around the feeders clean.

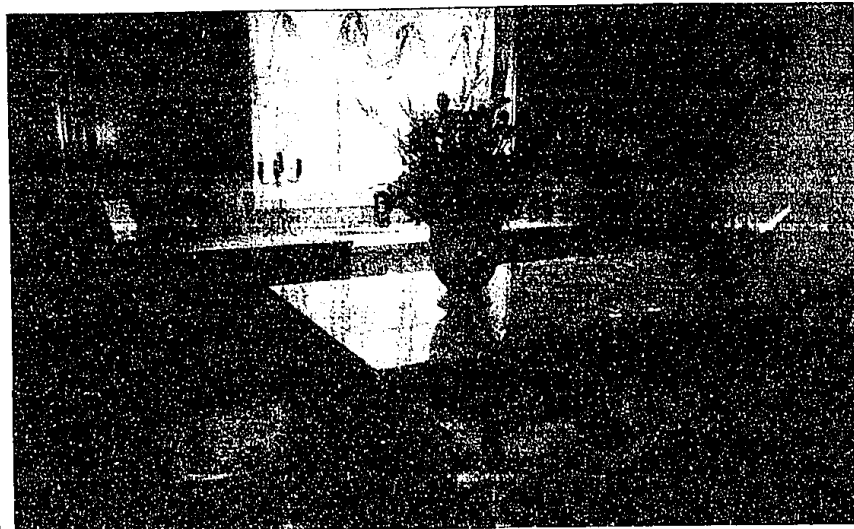
Provide seeds from a feeder rather than broadcast/scattering seed on the ground. Move your feeding stations periodically, so there will be less concentration of bird droppings.

Roomier Recherche

Recherche Fine Consignment Furniture in Waterford has doubled the size of its store to 8,000 square feet. It has also added a visual catalog to its Web site, enabling customers to view some of the merchandise without coming into the store. Recherche is in the Waterford Place plaza at 3671 Highland Road, Call (248) 681-0120, e-mail info@recherche-furniture.com or visit www.recherche-furniture.com.

The business was founded to help people sell their higher quality furniture, art work and accessories. It offers upper end makes including Thomasville and Henredon, brand new custom-made pieces, older period pieces including mission, '50s modern, contemporary and antiques.

In addition to marketing items through the store, Recherche works through interior designers, real estate agents, computerized "wish lists" and the Web; presents special events, and sends a newsletter to contacts. Pickup and delivery for large and heavy pieces are available.



PHOTOS BY TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The kitchen features a farmhouse sink and a dining island. Architectural elements along one side of the island appear to help support the granite countertop.

Cottage charm

Area dwelling shows French Creole flair, flavor

The phrase "French Creole cottage" conjures scenes that combine history and romance - containing such images as horse-drawn carriages, flower-filled courtyards, slender flames encaused at the top of lampposts.

Such a structure isn't restricted to books and movies or by travel. One exists locally - an actual house in Birmingham by Timlin™ Building and Development.

The Birmingham firm designed and built a 2,950-square foot, two-story house that is in the style of a French Creole cottage. The project was researched to the point of visiting sites in New Orleans.

Design features at the residence convey a distinctive charm from both the present and the past. Jean Comb collaborated with company owner Bryan Timlin on the interior design.

"Every room has a personality in this house," Timlin said. "That's what makes it special."



Bryan Timlin placed a replica of a French Quarter courtyard in the French Creole cottage style house he built in Birmingham.

Timlin is working on a series of cottages in Birmingham. The others, scheduled to open this spring, will be in Savannah and Nantucket styles.

Cottages have a special appeal today, he says. "The market is now changing to what I'm going to call downsizing empty nesters," Timlin said. "They still want the modern amenities, they want charm."

"What they love about it is the mood it brings to mind."

INFLUENTIAL

The Creole culture was well-established in New Orleans by the late 18th century. At that time, the architecture reflected a combination of French and Spanish traditions, and influences from the Caribbean, according to Timlin.

The interior is picturesque as well, with such features as hardwood floors, crown molding and 9-foot ceilings.

The handcrafted French mahogany front doors open into the parlor, which in the 1800s was a place where visitors were greeted and where they waited.

Over the fireplace, which is centered in the back wall, hangs a painting of a plantation and bayou. Scones with glass hurricane lanterns are on either side of the fireplace. A graceful stairway lines one side of the room.

"The parlor really was a transition room," Timlin said.

A powder room is at one side just inside the front door. Like other rooms, the door here features a hinged transom. Transoms provided cross ventilation at a time before air conditioning, Timlin said.

The bright, roomy kitchen is like a theater where the performance of food preparation will be staged. A farmhouse sink is nestled comfortably with a Sub-Zero refrigerator, Thermador gas range, Bosch dishwasher and microwave.

Light-colored granite tops the counters and the dining island. On one side of the dining island, elegant architectural elements seem to support the countertop, and high chairs are in a line.

PLEASE SEE COTTAGE, C2

STORY BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

Tropical theme brings warmth, openness to condo living



Light spills into the dining area at the Cassidy Place condominium model near downtown Plymouth. Parson's chairs in an olive tone and red accessories balance a dark wood table base and deep chocolate velvet drapes, all of which give the space an elegant feeling.

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
STAFF WRITER

The living room, kitchen and dining area at Cassidy Place's model condominium has an open, breezy feeling, as if a turquoise ocean roars outside.

"When you move into a condominium, the walls are white, and people think it's like living in an apartment," said Anne Musson, one of the designers who furnished and decorated the model at Cassidy Place, a new development of 30 units within walking distance of downtown Plymouth.

"But it's not, it's your paradise." Musson and her partner on the project, Cheryl Breneman, are

interior decorators at Park View Gallery, the offshoot design studio of Gabriela's gift and home accessories store in Plymouth.

"We wanted something that would be welcoming to all generations. We wanted people to come right in and feel warm and at home," Breneman said of the project, which the duo completed in two weeks.

The results showcase how a theme can inform design. For Cassidy Place's two-bedroom model, Musson and Breneman chose a popular trend, the tropics.

"We started with this sort of global Tommy Bahama idea," Musson said.

From there, a color palette of warm tones with accents of burgundy, plus neutral upholstered furniture coupled with dark wood pieces, were natural choices.

However, Musson and Breneman opted to use transitional furniture compatible with varying styles and tastes.

"If you took away all the Tommy Bahama, you would have a base that could be very traditional or more contemporary," Breneman said.

But the tropical look won't likely disappear anytime soon, especially in Michigan, she said.

"When you're living in

PLEASE SEE TROPICAL, C2

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www.observerandeccentric.com