

Craft shop caters to country theme

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MT ZION — Most women know that decorating a home in a country theme is very popular today. One farm wife has taken advantage of this popularity. Audrey Mull, a farm wife from Mt. Zion, Lebanon county, produces and markets crafts with a country flair.

Audrey recently opened a craft shop near Mt. Zion, where she sells her own homemade items, including countless strip quilted items, tin and copper punch, grapevine wreaths, woven wheat hearts, calico accessories, baler twine wreaths, and more.

The opening of her shop was the result of a rapidly increasing business. Audrey has been involved in crafts since she married a dairy farmer more than three years ago. Along with a husband, she got the "privilege" of helping to milk. This did not keep her busy and, since her husband preferred that she not work off the farm, she began making craft items and participating in local shows. In fact, it was her husband, Ken, who persuaded her to go to the first craft show that launched her business.

The idea of making and selling craft items was not new to Audrey. She remembers making and selling suede handbags as a teenager. She sold over 200! Obviously, she was a wise businesswoman even then.

Her business has grown rapidly over the past three years. Last fall she found it a problem to try to show her products to customers.

"Everything was packed in boxes," she said.

Thus the idea of a small store was the next step in her business endeavor. A small summer house a few yards from her home was remodeled over the winter months and has become a beautiful display area.

Audrey originally hoped to do some of her work in the shop, but

has found the entire store is needed for display purposes.

Her first products were macrame and twine wreaths. It was not long until she added sewn items. Although beautifully decorated twine wreaths are still part of the display, strip quilted items are now the most numerous.

One of her most popular items is a wooden towel rack with a calico duck perched on the top with elegant lace-accented hand towels. This is a part of what Audrey feels makes her items so popular.

At Audrey's it is possible to have a number of accessories for your bathroom, all of coordinating calicos. Beautiful strip quilted toilet seat covers, tissue covers, towel racks, and much more are available. These products combine the country theme of quilting with a little lace for an "extra-special" look. Also, soon to be added to the inventory will be bolts of matching fabrics and lace which will allow the home decorator to make coordinating curtains to complete the decorating scheme.

Although Audrey sells items directly from her store, a high percentage of her business is made on order of customers who wish to select the fabrics to coordinate with their home. The availability of custom designs has been a boost to the business. Often a customer will come to pick up an order and decide to order another item when she sees other products on display.

Many items for sale are in response to a customer request. This was the case with tin punch. Audrey made an item for her home and people asked if she had these available for sale. She practiced a little more and soon had become skilled enough to offer framed pieces of tin and copper punch.

Actually, Audrey says she never dreamed her first ventures into selling crafts would reach this size. She found herself maintaining a larger inventory to meet the demand, and now it has become a full-time venture.



Audrey has spent many hours remodeling a small summer house to open a store in which to market her custom-made country decorating accents.

A new strip-quilted item will be coming soon — a small wooden stool with strip-quilted top. Audrey also plans to begin growing some of the dried flowers and accents she uses in her arrangements. She has started many plants this spring and looks forward to her first crop this fall.

Audrey enjoys being outside during the summer months and this project will keep her outside while producing her own flowers. If this new venture succeeds, Audrey hopes to offer dried flowers for sale in the store.

The wheat used in her wheat weaving is also grown on their farm. A special variety which is bearded and has a very long head is hand-seeded by Audrey.

What makes this store and these craft items so popular? Audrey readily admits the current trend to country decorating has helped. However, one of the best features is that the customer buys directly from the craftsman. There is no middle man to earn a commission and items can be made to order.

Audrey also attributes much of her success to her husband's encouragement. Although he farms over 100 acres and milks 50 cows, Ken finds time to accompany Audrey to most of her shows. He enjoys meeting the people and assists with customers at shows.

Ken got her started in this venture and has continued to make her craft business a priority.

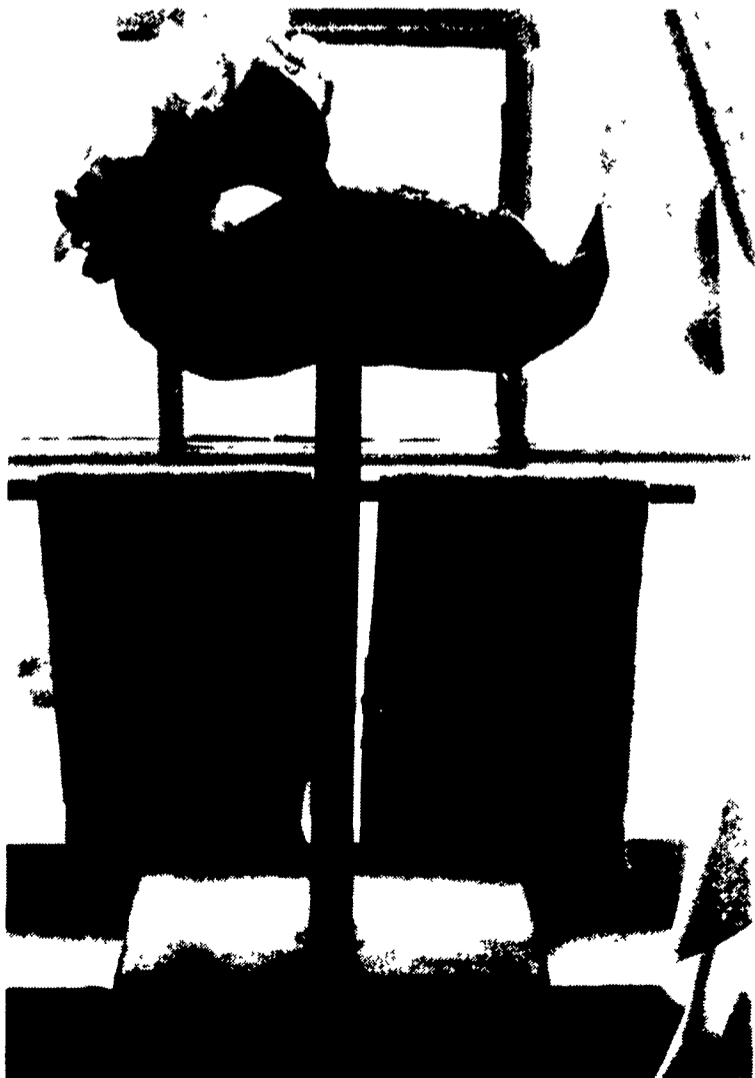
Ken and Audrey Mull invite you to stop by and visit "Audrey's Country Crafts" which is located 2½ miles off Interstate 78 or one mile north of Mt. Zion along Union



Woven wheat hearts are made of wheat grown by Audrey specifically for this purpose.

Road in Lebanon county. You may just drop in or call them at 717-865-6524 to be sure that someone will be in the store. They are not open for business on Sundays.

Treat yourself—take an afternoon drive through some of Lebanon county's beautiful farm land and explore Audrey's Country Crafts.



Coordinated bathroom accessories are Audrey's most sought after products. One example is a wooden towel rack with a calico duck accenting the top.

Homestead Notes