

Be Flexible About Furniture Choices

A husband is the only permanent fixture a new bride should insist on for her first home.

Be flexible about furnishings, advise the editors of 1,001 Decorating Ideas magazine. Put your troussseau money where it will mean the most — in a good bed, in a durable sofa, in an important rug — and fill in the gaps with imagination.

Too often a new couple is tempted to "wait till we can afford exactly what we want." And so they live on and on with echoes and empty spaces, apologetically putting their friends on floor pillows and propping the TV up on bricks.

Decorating done on a shoestring needn't look down at the heels. In fact, being short on funds can force you to be long on ideas that really give a room personality. To start you thinking, here's a primer of budget boosters from the pages of 1,001:

• Think paint. One bright color on just one wall makes the entire room feel furnished.

• Get some of those handsome sheets out of your linen closet and up at your windows. You can make laminated window shades in an evening, using one of the new peel-and-stick kits. Draperies don't take much longer since the sheets are prehemmed. If you can sew a straight line you can make pinch-pleated draperies with premeasured pleater tape and companion hooks from your sewing notions counter. Sheets can also dramatize a wall: run a shirring cord through top and bottom hems and staple them to your moldings. Sheets make great shower curtains, too, especially when they are coordinated with your towels.

• Shop garage sales. You may not find great antiques, but anything old and interesting adds character to your rooms... as is, or customized with paint, with fabric or with wallpaper.

• Shop the dime store. Its counters are crowded with "life-giving" accessories—a colander to fill with fruit for a centerpiece; a

collection of straw mats for a wall collage; bandanas to stitch into throw pillows; a small "oriental" rug to hang in the hall.

• Turn a green thumb up on plants, as many as you can love. There's no better way to fill an empty corner, both physically and emotionally.

• Beg rug remnants. Or

buy a bunch of discontinued samples from your floorcovering dealer. Taped together, they make a pleasing patchwork underfoot.

• Explore wallcoverings. Super designs come pre-pasted (just wet and hang) and strippable (which means you can yank them down when you move).

• Create your own art. A yard or so of interesting fabric can stand in hand-somely for that tapestry you're waiting to inherit. Or bring an old book home from a rummage sale and frame its illustrations inexpensively at the five-and-ten. Cluster them on one wall for maximum impact.

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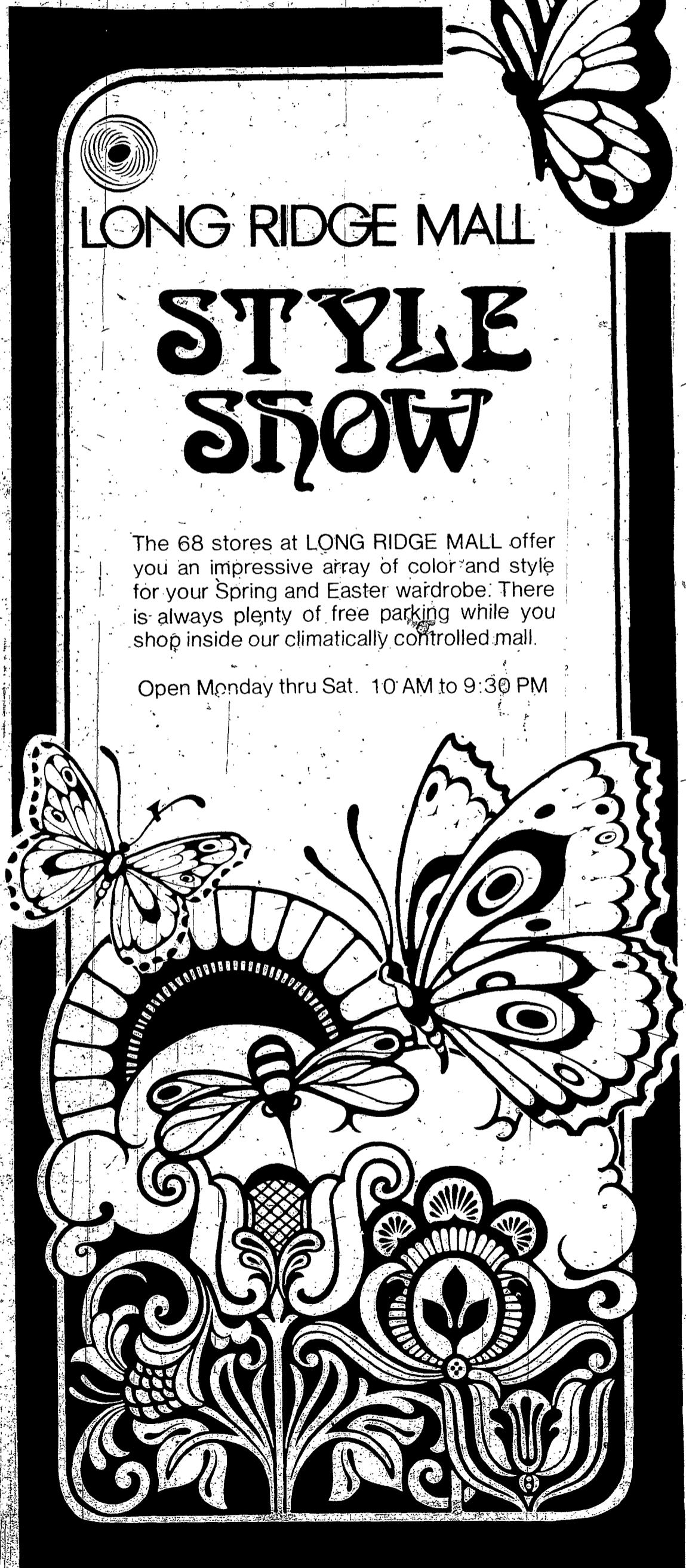
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