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SHOP TALK

Clawfoot Supply, the Erlanger direct merchant of claw foot tubs and antique reproduction fixtures, is expanding into home lighting and decorative hardware with the launch of its Signature Hardware line. In addition to the cast iron and acrylic claw foot tubs, sinks, toilets and shower rods and ring products, inventory will include chandeliers, pendants, lanterns, sconces and mounted lighting plus table and floor lamps and gas and exterior lights. Check out the new lines at www.signaturehardware.com.

COCOA DECOR

Skip the eggnog and schnapps. Interior designer Pamela Green, from the Art of Holiday Design Web site, decorates her parties with all things chocolate, including chocolate candles, a sweet topiary and chocolate cone trees. As the candles burn down the chocolate releases its enticing aroma. "They're so striking . . . easy to make, and the clean-up is delicious," says Green.

To make the candles:

Lay white, gold or silver tapered candles on a cookie sheet covered with tin foil.

Using a whisk, drizzle streams of melted chocolate in a zig-zag pattern to create an abstract "web" over the candles.

Coat one side first.

After the chocolate solidifies, rotate the candles and repeat until all sides are evenly coated.

Mix light and dark chocolate for interest.

More info: www.theartofholidaydesign.com.

EASY-CLEAN COOKWARE

Villeroy & Boch has cooked up a new line of cookware that can hold its own next to a centerpiece and come clean without scrubbing. The glazed surface of Ceramicplus cookware repels dirt - even baked-on, crusty mac & cheese casseroles - and cleans up with a rinse of water. The ovenproof designs can travel safely from fridge to preheated oven (up to 425 degrees) to table. Several shapes and sizes are available in V&B's most popular patterns, including Cottage, French Garden, Home Elements, Petite Fleur and more in lasagna dishes, quiche, soufflé and square or round bakers. \$15 and up. See the line at www.villeroy-boch.com. Pieces will be at Macy's after Jan. 1.

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PARTY PARROT

This colorful parrot perched on the holiday bar will go a long way to welcome the new year by opening the celebratory vino. In tropical blue, green and black, the cocky corkscrew also makes a quirky hostess gift. \$42 at Voltage in Oakley. 3209 Madison Road, (513) 871-5483.

SHELF SAVERS

Refrigerator shelves take a beating over the holiday with defrosting turkeys, leaky desserts and oozing leftovers. Duck brand Fridge Fresh Liners go a step beyond the call of duty soaking things up by adding

baking soda to battle food odors. The latest liner rendition, seven times more absorbent than a paper towel, soaks up and traps leaks and spills in 6-by-10-inch perforated sheets. A four-pack is \$1.50 at Wal-mart.

WINTER SCHEDULING

Timing is everything, especially when you are trying to get the best price on work around your house. Scheduling work in the off-season will cut down the waiting list. Angie Hicks, owner of the consumer group Angie's List, says "even some outdoor jobs are possible, especially if you have a few days of good weather." Her list of services to get on the books in winter include:

Carpet cleaning: January and February are good bets, after the holiday rush.

Decks: Don't wait until spring to book work. As long as the temperature is above freezing many can get the work done.

Gutter cleaning/repair: Get on a contractor's schedule and let them know they can fit you in during a good weather stretch in January, February or March.

Interior painting: In January and February you are not competing with exterior jobs.

Landscaping: Now is the time for planning and design services to get a head start.

Remodeling: Spring and summer are busy for remodelers working on jobs that can only be done in warmer weather, so January and February are good times to schedule indoor remodeling, trim, woodwork or new flooring.

Tree service: The best time to get this done is actually between December and March. Cutting away limbs in winter causes less damage to trees. Avoid the fall, which is peak for these contractors.

More info: www.angieslist.com.

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