

**January 12th, 2013**

It is amazing how one thing leads to another. Several years ago when attending Griffin Martin's wedding in Kansas City, I commented to Sonia on how much I admired the candelabra they had used to decorate one of the serving tables at the reception. Sonia found out that it had come from Nell's Hill, a gift shop near the Martins. She went online to see if she could order an identical candelabra for me but could not find it, so the Martins actually ended up going to Nell Hill's in search of that lovely silver branching light fixture. Unfortunately, there were no duplicates. However, in the course of investigating this business, Sonia found out that the owner, Mary Carol Garrity, had written a book entitled Entertaining in Style. Since Sonia was denied the pleasure of surprising me with that extraordinary piece, she surprised me, instead, with Mrs. Garrity's book from the library. As you already know, Sonia and I take breaks from our busy schedule to relax by sitting on our loveseat and reading through gardening, decorating, and cooking books. But it isn't often that I find one that provides so much inspiration. More than not, I am disappointed. Not this one. From cover to cover, I was enthralled. From lovely tabletop settings to tastefully appointed rooms this book held my attention.

  

For the past thirty-four years, I have loved decorating my home and planning celebrations for my family and friends. I was raised to serve and it is what I love best-making other people happy, especially my family! So it was with great joy that I embarked on a lovely journey through Mary Carol Garrity's fashion show of her 130-year-old Greek revival home's seasonal wardrobe.

     

Besides the gorgeous photography that fills the pages, the first thing that caught my eye was the dedication to her *stylish mother, Mary Lou Diebolt*, who still delivers my lunch every day to Nell Hill's...the highlight of my *day*." In the introduction, she goes on to honor her grandmother-*I absolutely love to entertain. Nothing gets my creative juices flowing more than planning and hosting...Perhaps I inherited this great love of celebration from my grandmother Nell Hill, for whom I named my first home furnishing emporium...Nell made everyone who entered her home feel like the most special person on earth. I strive to reflect that same spirit every time I open my doors to visitors.* Here was a kindred spirit, and yet, I did not really realize just how much, until we started exploring page upon page of glorious seasonal decorations.

   

I, too, inherited my love for entertaining from my stylish mother. And, I, too, strive to make everyone who enters our doors feel like the most special people on earth. And... because my parents were in retail-Hallmark

cards, party goods, jewelry, toiletries, and gifts, each season brought forth a new genre of decorations to fit that particular time of year and holiday. So that after years of people asking me why I change my decorations and table settings so frequently-I thought everyone did-I finally realized that it comes naturally because my parent's merchandise dictated the decorations and the frequency of change according to the season and the upcoming holiday. This, of course, just naturally spilled over into our home, as my mother kept up with the alterations in our store. Similarly, Mary Carol Garrity decorates according to the seasons and the holidays, but with a panache that is unparalleled with anything I have ever seen. It is not often that I find a decorator that inspires my soul like she did when I first opened up the pages of her gorgeous book. Indeed, others must feel the same, as ninety-five percent of her customers repeatedly visit her store from every corner of the country. ♦ ♦

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So you can imagine how eager Sonia and I were to visit Nell Hill's! After several years of great anticipation, we finally arrived at our destination, and we could not have been any happier. As expected, the store is classy from top to bottom, inside out, even down to the door handles. NH for Nell Hill-the most sophisticated door handles I have even seen.

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This beautiful 16,000 square foot building encompasses sixteen rooms that showcase settings which reflect the heart of home-furniture, upholstered pieces, textiles, floral, silver, crystal, china, and other decorative amenities that help create beautiful, cozy, comfortable rooms for the family. ♦♦

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And for those who need some expertise, designers await to help them customize their homes.

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It was an honor for Sonia and I to let Mary Carol Garrity know just how much we appreciated her elegant style and to thank her for sharing it with us. I purchased her book for Sonia and had Mary sign it as a remembrance of my love for my family through elegantly appointed rooms and lovely celebrations. ♦

Nell Hill's, Briarcliff Village 4101 N Mulberry Drive, Kansas City Mo 64116. 816-746-4320 ♦ <http://www.nellhills.com> www.nellhills.com

 

src="images/stories/blog/nh-8268.jpg" /></p> <p> </p> <p> ♠</p> <p> Consistent with Mary's elegant style, her store, Nell Hill's is situated in one of the loveliest shopping areas we have ever experienced.</p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> ♠</p> <p> As one would expect, Sugar Mamma's Bakery <span data-scayt\_word="Caf♠ data-scaytid="17">Caf♠/span> caught my eye. Once inside, we were greeted by a case of delightful cupcakes. In anticipation of a long drive home, I purchased one for each of us, and then one. <a href="http://www.sugarmammasbakery.com"><span data-scayt\_word="www.sugarmammasbakery.com" data-scaytid="15">www.sugarmammasbakery.com</span></a></p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> ♠</p> <p> Across the way was simply-the <span data-scayt\_word="Caf♠ data-scaytid="19">Caf♠/span> at <span data-scayt\_word="Briarcliff" data-scaytid="20">Briarcliff</span> Village. The boys were waiting for us at a table laden with our delicious lunch. The room was clean, crisp, and cozy. <a href="http://www.thecafeatbriarcliff.com"><span data-scayt\_word="www.thecafeatbriarcliff.com" data-scaytid="21">www.thecafeatbriarcliff.com</span></a></p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p>