

Store makes service, good prices fashionable

BY LAURIE HUMPHREY
STAFF WRITER

Making people look fashionable is what they do best, and during the sidewalk sale, they'll do it cheaper.

"We coordinate women so that they have a complete look when they walk out the doors," said Sue Loussia-Hickey, owner of Eleganza boutique in West Bloomfield. "And we specialize in unique sportswear, evening wear, casual wear and accessories."

Open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, staying open an hour later on Thursday, Loussia-Hickey and her staff of three cater to women of all

ages and sizes at 7415 Orchard Lake Road. During the sidewalk sale however, staff will greet their customers at 9 a.m.

Loussia-Hickey says they can dress women up or down for any occasion — a cocktail party, a wedding, showers, etc. — for a reasonable price.

"Prices range from \$100 to \$600 for evening wear," said the boutique owner of 14 years. "We have high quality, unique merchandise for a reasonable price."

Prices on select spring and summer goods will be discounted even further, up to 70 percent off, during the annual

sale.

Aside from the personal service and reasonable prices, Loussia-Hickey said her clients appreciate their unique merchandise, all displayed within the 14,000-square-foot boutique.

Featuring names like: Votre Nom, Suzelle and Donna Jessica, Loussia-Hickey said clients have different tastes and needs. So she works to satisfy all her customers with a wide range of fabrics, patterns and styles.

Additionally, her clients are instructed on how to interchange their outfits. The combination of personal service, reasonable prices and unique merchandise results in a high number of repeat customers.

"Seventy-five percent of our clientele are repeat customers," she emphasized.

According to Loussia-Hickey, part of what makes their personal service so

good is the interaction between the staff and the clients.

"Our staff is fantastic with customers," she said. "They find out what the customer needs, then they will pull out something to fit that need and the customer's figure."

Training is important, said the boutique owner. "And so is having an eye for it."

"No woman wants to see someone bring her a size 14 if she is a size 10; and no woman would want to see a size 10 if she is a size 14."

Focusing on a complete look, Loussia-Hickey said their biggest service to some women is the accessorizing.

"A lot of times, women have a difficult time accessorizing an outfit. So we put her together."

All of this is done to make the woman look "classically fashionable."



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Area boys-wear outfitter outlasts the competition

BY LAURIE HUMPHREY
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Forty years and three locations since their origination, they have done what all their competitors have failed to do — stay in business.

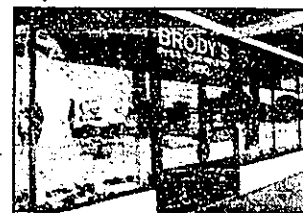
"We are Michigan's largest and single boys store," said Marc Shindler, owner of Brody's Boys & Young Men's Wear in West Bloomfield. "We are the only one left, all our competitors are gone."

Providing clothing for males sized 4-50, Shindler said his store at 6690 Orchard Lake Road "specializes in service."

"We trip over them," said the owner jokingly about the amount of attention each of their customers receive. The reasoning behind it is simple — "young boys hate to try on clothes. Moms drag them in here so we try to make it as quick and painless as possible." He remembered one boy who disliked the chore of trying on clothes so much, he kicked Shindler.

According to the store owner, the store carries a wide range of clothing from casual to dress to specialty items in slim, regular, husky and stout builds. And "we try to be discount," he said, as discount as they can be with such an attention for detail. They have three tailors at the store all the time to follow through with their service motto: "We're here to take care of you."

The family-owned and operated store is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Thursday till 9 p.m. "Never on Sunday," said Shindler. "And the hours will be the same during



STAFF PHOTO BY DAN DEAN

Left standing tall: Brody's clothing store is the last of Michigan's all-boys outfitters.

the sidewalk sale.

"Everything on the sidewalk will be half price or less" including jeans, suits, jackets and bathing suits, said Shindler. "I'm going to be selling \$100 jackets for \$29.99."

But just because the clothing will be bottom-line bargains, the service from salespeople will not.

"We're still here because we care, and we work really, really hard at it," said Shindler. "They're (the sales staff) people who know what they are doing."

The high number of return customers are a testament to that statement. "And oftentimes, people return to one person. They want the same person who helped them before."

"I'm waiting on third generation customers," he said.

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