

Girgenti Custom Window Treatments Inc.

Talk to Stefano and Leonora Girgenti and the first thing you notice is their energy. These are people who love what they do, and who still get excited about every new project. The next thing you notice is their smiles. They are happy doing what they do, and are proud of their work.

“What they do” is create custom window treatments and custom room décor elements that help to pull the total look of a room together. Their customers range from individual clients to large businesses, one room to an entire home, from residential to commercial, in Canada and the U.S. For example, the entrance window treatments at Carmen’s in Hamilton and Oakville are two of Stefano’s designs. The backdrop that was created for Bill Clinton’s visit to Hamilton was created by Girgenti’s and donated to Morgan Firestone Respiratory Centre.

The couple is carrying on a Hamilton tradition that is currently celebrating its fortieth year. The business was founded by Stefano’s father, Charlie Girgenti, in a small York Street store in 1965. Prior to that, Charlie had sold imported Italian linens and other wares door to door throughout the Hamilton and Niagara Peninsula. Since there were no credit cards, Charlie wrote what each customer owed him in a little book, and they paid as they could. It was the beginning of a reputation for generosity and trust that Charlie, with his wife Venera, built on when he opened his York Street store, and carried with him as he specialized in window treatments and grew his business into a thriving company.

Now, Stefano continues on both the commitment to excellence and the sterling reputation of his father, in newly expanded premises at 1200 Stonechurch Road. Much of his business is based on referrals from satisfied customers, some of whom were Charlie’s customers or are children of those customers. The commitment to providing clients with excellence in customer service is a lesson that Stefano learned working alongside his father.

“One of the real strengths of our service is the fact that we work as a team here, and we all bring our different skills and talents to a project. Often we will brainstorm a challenging window design — a bay or an arched window, for example, and everyone contributes to the solution. That kind of collaboration really helps us find the best results for our customers.”

The newly enlarged showroom is spacious and attractive. Stefano is particularly proud of the “Control at Your Fingertips” Room, where remote control drapery and shades are installed for customers to ‘test drive’ the latest designs. “We are finding that today’s customer wants to take the difficulty out of life. With a remote controlled blind, even a window that is difficult to access can be installed with blinds that can be opened or closed with ease. It is also a real improvement for anyone with arthritis or a disability. Just a click of the remote, and the blinds open or shut,” Stefano’s eyes twinkle as he demonstrates a Silhouette blind that can be operated with the push of a button. (It’s obvious



Stefano and Leonora Girgenti in the showroom at 1200 Stone Church Road in Hamilton.

these innovative window devices are one of his special interests.) There are remote control shades for skylights, and also for the state-of-the-art home theatre, as well as temperature-sensitive shades that can be programmed to automatically open or close to keep out the sunshine on a hot day.

The design centre is Leonora’s territory. Working with a team of design consultants whose training consists of formal design training, home décor shows and frequent product knowledge seminars both in North America and Europe, the team is up to date with the latest trends in colour and design. There are shelves of sample books and a huge range of fabrics and trims, from Robert Allen to Maxwell Fabrics and Unique Fine Fabrics, and a wide range of imported lines.



Girgenti Custom Drapery & Window Treatments Inc.
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"I think that the many window treatments on display in the showroom are really helpful for the customer to visualize what the draperies will look like," Leonora advises. "It's one thing to look at fabric swatches and photographs, but it is so much better when you can see a complete window treatment that is similar to what you may be planning." There is even a kid's corner, with clever style ideas that any child would love to have in his room.

The design consultants offer free in-home consultations and will lead the client step-by-step through the design process. A visit to the spacious showroom will inspire anyone, whether you're looking for a traditional window treatment or a contemporary one. There are drapery of raw silk, the hottest trend right now, as well as champagne aluminum shutters for a clean, modern look. An entire section devoted to shutters showcases wood, polysatin and aluminum.

Stefano and Leonora emphasize the teamwork aspect of their business, explaining that from the initial consultation through to the final installation, Girgenti employees work together to ensure that the customer is fully satisfied. "Everything we do is custom work. We are not a 'cash and carry' place, so our attention to detail is complete," Stefano explains. "My employees are like my family."

Girgenti's enjoys a close relationship with its customers, too. "After all," says Leonora, "window dressing is very personal. When we complete a job and know that the client is pleased, there's an immense feeling of satisfaction. We love to see the look on our client's faces when they see how a room has been transformed."

That's the reward of doing a job well, and it's why so many of Girgenti's customers are repeats or referrals from happy customers.

"That's why our name is on the business," says Stefano, with pride.



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