

TRENDS FOR MEN - A SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

Family-owned men's wear store founded 30 years ago

Like father, like son' is perhaps the best way to describe the work ethic, business savvy and goals shared by Sultanali (Sam) Visram and Mohamed (Moe) Visram, the enterprising father/son team behind Trends for Men.

"We work very well together," confirms Sam who opened his first Kitchener-based clothing store 30 years ago, several years before his son was even born.

"I came to Canada from Uganda in November 1972. We had a clothing store and yard goods business there (started by Sam's father). We were also dealers for Bata Shoes. It was very successful but then we had to leave ... and came to this country penniless."

Together with his wife, young daughter and other family members, Sam initially found refuge in Leamington where he lists a bakery and Heinz as two former employers before making the move to Kitchener.

"I worked for an awning company," recalls the elder Visram of his first

job in KW.

He also went to Conestoga College and completed an upholstery program. While seeking upholstery-related employment, however, his entrepreneurial spirit reemerged and Sam decided to get back into retail.

"It was time to work for myself again. That's what I've always enjoyed doing."

In December 1977, he opened Karim's Men's and Ladies' Wear on King Street in Kitchener, a 1,500 square foot shop in which the merchandise eventually evolved from lower-end to medium and higher quality lines. In 1981, Moe was born.

With his King Street store firmly established, 1992 saw Sam and his brothers, Nizar (Nick) and Karim, open a new shop called 'Just for Him' in Stratford - a complete men's wear retailer with everything from casual to business attire. The success of that shop soon led to another Just for Him in Highland Hills Mall in Kitchener ("we opened

that one in October 1993 ... it did so well I soon closed the King Street store") and, soon after, a Stanley Park Mall location. Business was brisk.

After dissolving their business partnership in 1999, Sam assumed sole ownership of the Highland Hills shop at which Moe had already been working part-time for several years.

It was 'business as usual' (with Moe becoming more involved with the store in his teen years and throughout college) until pending changes to Highland Hills Mall prompted the Visrams to start seeking a new location.

"When we found this spot, we knew it was right," affirms Moe who encouraged his father to rename, rebrand and, ultimately, refresh the store in conjunction with its relocation to the Sunrise Shopping Centre.

"We opened Trends for Men in October 2005 and closed Just for Him in Highland Hills at the end of January 2006."

Within the appealing 2,700 square foot shop, the Visrams cater to a long list of long-time customers and a growing clientele, offering an extensive selection of medium to higher-end attire, both classic and



Trends for Men is located at the Sunrise Centre in Kitchener.

more contemporary styles. This includes casual clothing, jeans, dress pants and shirts, jackets, coats, footwear and other men's accessories.

"We try to carry a lot of domestic merchandise," says Moe, who recently acquired ownership of

Trends for Men from his father and does most of the buying now. "About 95 per cent of our business and formal attire is Canadian-made."

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Trends for Men father and son team, Sam and Moe Visram.