

KLAFF'S

HISTORY

Klaff's Home Design Center was founded in 1921 by Joe and Mary Klaff as a wholesale plumbing supply store. At that time, the company supplied pipes, fittings, cast-iron sinks and tubs for a professional customer base, which included plumbers, architects, and contractors. Today, Klaff's is the largest independent upscale home design retailer in the country, offering consumers a 33,000 square foot showcase for interior and exterior lighting, baths, kitchens, accessories, decorative hardware and, most recently, tile and stone – with a distinctive personality.

Eighty-two years ago, Joe and Mary Klaff started a trend in the home design industry that would set the pace for home decorating centers nationwide: one-stop shopping enhanced by premier customer service and unsurpassed home design expertise. The enterprising couple grew their business by stocking everything their customers wanted; if they didn't have it, they would go out of their way to get it for them. Business as a plumbing supply wholesaler thrived until the outbreak of the Second World War. Due to the unavailability of its popular cast-iron and vitreous china fixtures, Klaff's expanded its category offerings to include exterior and interior lighting fixtures and old-fashioned nuts and bolts hardware, in addition to bathroom fittings and accessories.

During the post-war housing boom, Klaff's took advantage of a burgeoning building industry and launched a lumber supply business. Not content to simply offer building materials, Joe Klaff seized upon what would later catapult his family business into the in-roads of retailing history: the concept of complete custom home design packages. In 1951, Klaff's introduced a unique line of custom package homes – "K" homes, as they came to be known, containing lumber, electrical supplies, plumbing materials, fixtures and building plans. In 1952, Klaff's expanded its lighting department and added its first collection of table and floor lamps. Today, Klaff's carries and displays over 7,000 different lighting fixtures, as well as over 3,000 bath products and dozens of concept showcases for the bathroom, 54 tile vignettes featuring over 70 different floor treatments, hundreds of decorative hardware items, and 16 unique fully-accessorized kitchen displays.

In 1954, Klaff's began selling stock kitchen cabinets to complement its existing lines of kitchen sinks and faucets – again adhering to the full-service design concept that distinguishes Klaff's as a leading innovator in the retail industry.

When Joe and Mary Klaff passed away in the 1950's, daughters Debbie Klaff Katz and Mollie Klaff Passero took over the helm as Treasurer and President, respectively. One of the first things they did was close the company's lumber yard and channel all their resources into three major growth categories: interior and exterior lighting; table and floor lamps; and hardware. Then they initiated yet another marketing strategy that continues to set the company apart from its competitors – high-style merchandising and display, making the store a must-see destination for professionals and non-professionals, alike. The Klaff's family believes in impressing their customers "not only by what they see, but how they see it."

In 1970, Klaff's closed its kitchen cabinet department and reinvigorated its bath department with complete showroom displays, featuring an extensive array of high-end bathrooms. Today, Klaff's showcases the largest and most sophisticated bath showroom in the Northeast and represents more than 100 manufacturers of sinks, faucets, tubs, showers, toilets, hardware, mirrors and vanities.

Taking advantage of the growing consumer interest in home decorating, Klaff's replaced its traditional hardware with more upscale decorative hardware in the booming 1980's. Still functional, but far more stylish, Klaff's hardware offerings combine practicality with artistic flair, enabling consumers to incorporate knobs, drawer pulls, and handles into their design themes. Klaff's also expanded its interior and exterior lighting department, adding more lamps, shades, mirrors and fireplace accessories into its product mix.

In celebration of its 75th anniversary in 1996, Klaff's unveiled a new 4,000 square foot showroom space in its Washington Street South Norwalk, Conn. flagship store. The expansion featured two revolutionary home design services that have earned Klaff's national accolades from industry leaders, including recognition as Lighting Retailer of the Year in 1997. Klaff's was the first retailer in the

country to design and implement hands-on lighting labs into their showroom. The Landscape Lighting Design Studio and the Interior Lighting Lab simulate indoor and outdoor environments to enable consumers to visualize and experiment with a variety of lighting techniques for their homes.

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Making history once again, Klaff's introduced a new elegantly-appointed 2,200 square foot kitchen showroom to the public in 1999. Combining custom cabinetry and design services, the kitchen department offered complete kitchen design, including lighting, plumbing, appliances, flooring, countertop and decorative hardware products, and installation. The showroom features the exclusive handcrafted cabinetry of British artist, Mark Wilkinson, who is renowned for his innovations in custom cabinetry. Consumers can explore 16 different fully accessorized custom cabinetry vignettes including kitchens, entertainment centers, and home offices, each showcasing a unique style and design statement. Highlights include a complete working kitchen for cooking demonstrations by renowned area chefs, and a full screen computerized monitor designed to project life-sized three-dimensional renderings of kitchen designs for customers. The showroom also features a spacious custom-designed wine cellar with refrigerated products by Chambrair. Positioned as a full service kitchen design firm, Klaff's also represents a full line of high-end appliances from Gaggenau, La Cornue, Chambriar, Miele, and Sub-Zero. In addition to its lighting and plumbing services and products, the company offers a wide variety of flooring, including wood, tile, limestone, slate and tumbled marble, and countertops, including Corian, custom tile, marble and granite, soapstone, copper, bronze, concrete and stainless steel.

Building on the family dream of becoming a true full-service home design store, in April, 2002, Klaff's opened a new 2,000 square foot tile and stone showroom at its South Norwalk flagship store. Complementing Klaff's home decorating focus, the store now offered a virtual catalog of the recent explosion of new color palettes, shapes, sizes and materials used in today's tiles. Fifty-four striking vignettes featuring over 70 different floor treatments pay tribute to the endless array of custom designs, colors and decorative patterns available to consumers in the market for flooring, backsplashes, countertops and bathrooms, and even wall mosaics.

Headquartered in South Norwalk, Connecticut, with offices at 165 Water Street, Klaff's is privately owned and operated by the second and third generations of the Klaff family. In addition to its South Norwalk showroom location, Klaff's renovated and expanded it's Danbury, Conn operations to offer the same extensive array of product showcases and categories as South Norwalk. Most recently in September of 2009 they opened a full-service home design center in the New York area making Klaff's of Scarsdale the third full-service design center under the Klaff's banner by offering the same unmatched selections of lighting, bath, kitchens, decorative hardware, tile & stone for the home.

The Klaff family operates a specialty lighting and decorative hardware showroom in Westport, Connecticut, and a wholesale plumbing, heating and air conditioning business in South Norwalk and Danbury.

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