

## **FABRIC FACTOR**

### **Dynamic duo of design help clients reinvent their homes**

by Christine Knapp

The entrepreneurial spirit of Mark Salsberry and Mark McConnell shines through in everything they do. From their expansive showroom, unmatched customer service, and beautiful, designer fabrics, customers look to owners Mark and Mark as the "go-to" experts for window-treatment design.

After leaving their corporate careers seventeen years ago, Mark and Mark never looked back. They purchased The Fabric Factory, later dropping the "y." Their goal was to turn this little business of bargain fabrics into an upscale design center with an extensive selection of quality fabrics, wall coverings and trims; specializing in custom blinds, shades, and draperies. The Fabric Factor was born.

Known for their one-on-one consultative approach, exclusive Hunter-Douglas window fashions, and expert design and engineering of window treatments, The Fabric Factor is a Hampton Roads staple. Mark Salsberry explains that with the coming of a new year, many people make resolutions to finally update their living areas.

We caught up with Mark Salsberry to walk us through selecting window-treatment options:

#### **How can someone become a Fabric Factor customer?**

"Our goal is to make every client know we value them.. We are very hands-on with the process, from the initial consultation through installation, which we handle in-house, without sub-contractors. We have sought out a diverse collection of fabrics, wall coverings and hardware at varying price points to appeal to as many people as possible. Paying attention to the customer's individual budget has always been a priority. We do our best to listen to what the client wants to achieve and offer solutions at different price points. We work with newly-married couples to help them create functional window treatments in their first homes, as well as interior designers who need help engineering living spaces. Anyone can be a Fabric Factor customer!"

#### **How do you guide your customers through selecting a new window treatment?**

"During the first home appointment, we dive more deeply into their priorities and budget. Many folks are not even sure of the right questions to ask, so we try to uncover their goals and design choices through this initial consultation. We educate on the front-end so that there are no surprises on the back-end (installation day)! We want to offer guidance and support to our customers so they feel completely confident in working with us. Our final goal is always the highest client satisfaction possible. We are interested in building long-term relationships, so we invest time with each customer, creating a final product that is more beautiful than they imagined."

**What if a customer wants to test out some colors and design options before deciding?**

"We offer a free fabric finder service, where folks can call or come in with their specs (colors, designs, etc.) and within a short period of time, we will pull together samples for them to review. We also send free sample swatches to their home upon request."

**What sets you apart from your competitors?**

"We constantly attend workshops, seminars and trade events so we can stay on the cutting edge of new styles and trends, as well as offer traditional treatments to those who want a classic style. We have a beautiful showroom where clients who have difficulty visualizing can come see treatment options on display and get inspired! We still offer free in-home consultations as well, so customers get the best of both worlds. Also, we are the only Hunter Douglas Showcase dealer on the Southside, offering the complete collection of Hunter Douglas window fashions, including the exclusive Alustra collection which is only sold by select dealers. We have one of the largest selections of designer fabrics in the area, and once a customer works with us, we are there for the installation, as well as servicing after. We're literally there with them from start to finish."



Fabric Factor Owners Mark Salsberry and Mark McConnell

### **What are some hot trends you're seeing today in window coverings?**

"Motorization. People want technology with their window treatments. Clients can incorporate hand-held remote controls or wireless switches, or even use the Hunter Douglas PowerView App, which sends out a signal via Wi-Fi and allows the customer to control their window shades through his/her tablet or smartphone. The technology allows clients to set timers for when their blinds automatically open or close each day, and they can also change these settings depending on the season. For instance, "movie-time" is an option, and the shades can lower to create a space ideal for movie-watching. Additionally, the minimalistic look is in. Cleaner lines, more textures (in fabrics and wall coverings), roller shades, and sheer shades are also in style. Overall, less is more. Wall coverings, such as wallpaper, are making a comeback as well."

### **Why should a customer choose Fabric Factor?**

"I was involved in performing arts for some 20 years, and have always enjoyed working with home interiors- particularly space planning, furniture and accessory placement. I also have a marketing and human resources background. Mark M., before his healthcare career, worked for a

small company in the world of fashion design and has always had a good eye for color. When we started Fabric Factor, our unique combination of talents and skill-sets allowed us to focus not only on color and design, but also on the function, engineering and configuration of treatments. Not all things will work in all applications, and it's important to have some guidance. My specialty has become offering solutions to the most vexing window treatment challenges, while Mark M. oversees the production and installation process. We provide the best of form and function, so all aspects are considered. Our customers know us as "Mark and Mark," and we work together as a team for our clients. Our background, as well as expertise in this arena, offers customers true peace-of-mind. We mix function with beauty to create the look our customers desire."

Mark and Mark are passionate about their customers and creating the best window treatments in the area. Fabric Factor is also a full-service source for bedding, upholstery, and slipcovers, including outdoor living treatments. It distributes a monthly email that keeps subscribers up-to-date on the latest color and design trends as well as tips for making living areas functional and beautiful.

"Whether people are looking for just a few fabric swatches or to completely re-design an entire commercial property, we want everyone to feel welcomed coming to Fabric Factor," Mark Salsberry says. "When I see the satisfaction and elation of a customer after a completed project, it makes it all worthwhile. It's why we do what we do."



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