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SELECTA FOOTWEAR



Frank and Petra Halk are ready to fit customers with fine footwear at their Main St. store.

By Jane Muller
 Selecta Footwear located at 250 Main St. has roots dating back several decades to the Hague in Holland.

There are two other Ontario stores with the same name in Tottenham and Bradford which was the first Canadian location which opened in the 1950s. The Milton store is run by Frank and Petra Halk and the business's heritage comes from Petra's side.

Frank's first experience in the shoe business is with this store which opened its doors in November 1974. With some assistance from his brother-in-law and father-in-law who run the other locations, he says it was easy to get into.

Petra is actually a school teacher and taught at Holy Rosary School until the birth of their only son Ted, now 6-years-old.

Now she works in the store with Frank, her husband for 15 years.

"We try to carry what everyone else hasn't got," explains Petra.

During a drive through Milton seven years ago the pair noticed a shoe store where theirs is now, called Bob Bartlett's Fine Footwear. They liked the location and found the store, which had thrived in Milton for 20 years' was available.

Milton's proximity to Highway 401 gave the town a lot of potential they decided.

Frank's mother and stepfather run a cow and calf operation on a farm owned by his stepdad's family since 1880.

The farm is located near Milton and he wanted to be close to them so a business in Milton was preferred.

"I wanted to be close to my family and the opportunity was here," Frank said.

He says Milton was a different town when the store opened and through the years their stock has been adjusted to the changes. Higher priced quality shoes are to be found there.

Brand names like German-made Rohde and Salamander shoes, Clark shoes from England and Italy and sandals from Brazil are among the selection of quality footwear available at Selecta.

The couple say they sell more women's shoes than men's. They also stock a selection of children's shoes, again with names which mean quality. Savage, Clark, Niki and Cougar are there for the small fry.

Boulet leather cowboy boots and Fry boots are popular items. Ladies can find a variety of leather purses to match with footwear. Canvas and straw bags are available for the summer season.

They carry Florsheim shoes for men and for the ladies, Celebrity and Nine-west.

"Improvements on Main St. have made downtown more for walking than for cars. People are going to have to change their parking habits," Frank suggests.

He claims Milton Mall is not the biggest threat to downtown merchants, but it is out of town shopping which drains downtown business.

"We need to get the right mix of stores on Main St.," said Frank.

He is optimistic the Bi-Way Department Store and the new Dominion store will help keep Miltonians in Milton to shop.

The store's interior has been modernized with many mirrors and acrylic shelves lining the walls.

The store has a rear entrance leading from a large parking lot for convenient shopping.

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