

Curtains open on new market

By BRUCE STAPLEY For Ontario, Sun-Drape is still the same. The co-owner of the recently opened custom window coverings shop in the Stouffville Place Mall

has been in the business for five years, helping her parents in their Newmarket store.

"I grew up in my parents' business," says the Richmond Hill resident. "I have a lot of experience with fabrics, drapes and window coverings."

Elfie, along with her partner-brother John Pless, has set up a complete showroom in the Stouffville Mall, and says she is able to handle the most advanced decorating tastes.

The shop features a variety of styles of window treatments including draperies, vertical blinds, mini blinds, pleated shades, and roller blinds.

Elfie also offers her customers a complimentary in-home service, where customers can have samples brought to their home, along with the required measurements, advice and an estimate.

Since most of the work is done in workrooms that are shared with her parents' business, Elfie says she is able to better control the overall quality of the product she sells.

"It enables us to offer high quality, and to be service oriented. That is very important in today's market," she says.

And so far, Stouffville has been more than receptive. "I've been pleased with the response," says Elfie. "The customers are coming in and commenting on how

nice it is to have a specialty window covering store in their area."

She's more than happy with the volume of business she has done since opening Sept. 6. "There was really no one offering such a service before we came," she notes.

Elfie makes a point of staying abreast of contemporary decorating trends, and has noticed a change in people's approach to window treatments.

"Classic treatments, wall-to-wall line draperies, and prints are very strong now. And although verticals were considered trendy, we're selling more than ever before," she says.

She notes that pleated shades are becoming popular as an alternative to mini-blinds. "They provide a soft fabric look with the function of a horizontal blind," Elfie adds.

Lace, she notes, is also going well.

But she maintains there is no one item that is "the style" today, claiming customers should choose what is right for their personal taste, and for their decor.

Elfie has been more than impressed with her mall neighbors at Stouffville Place, pointing out that there is a fast-growing camaraderie among merchants.

"We're all like family here," she says of the new facility. "We look after each other. It's a good collection of independent business people who seem to care about what they are doing."

farmer Jack's

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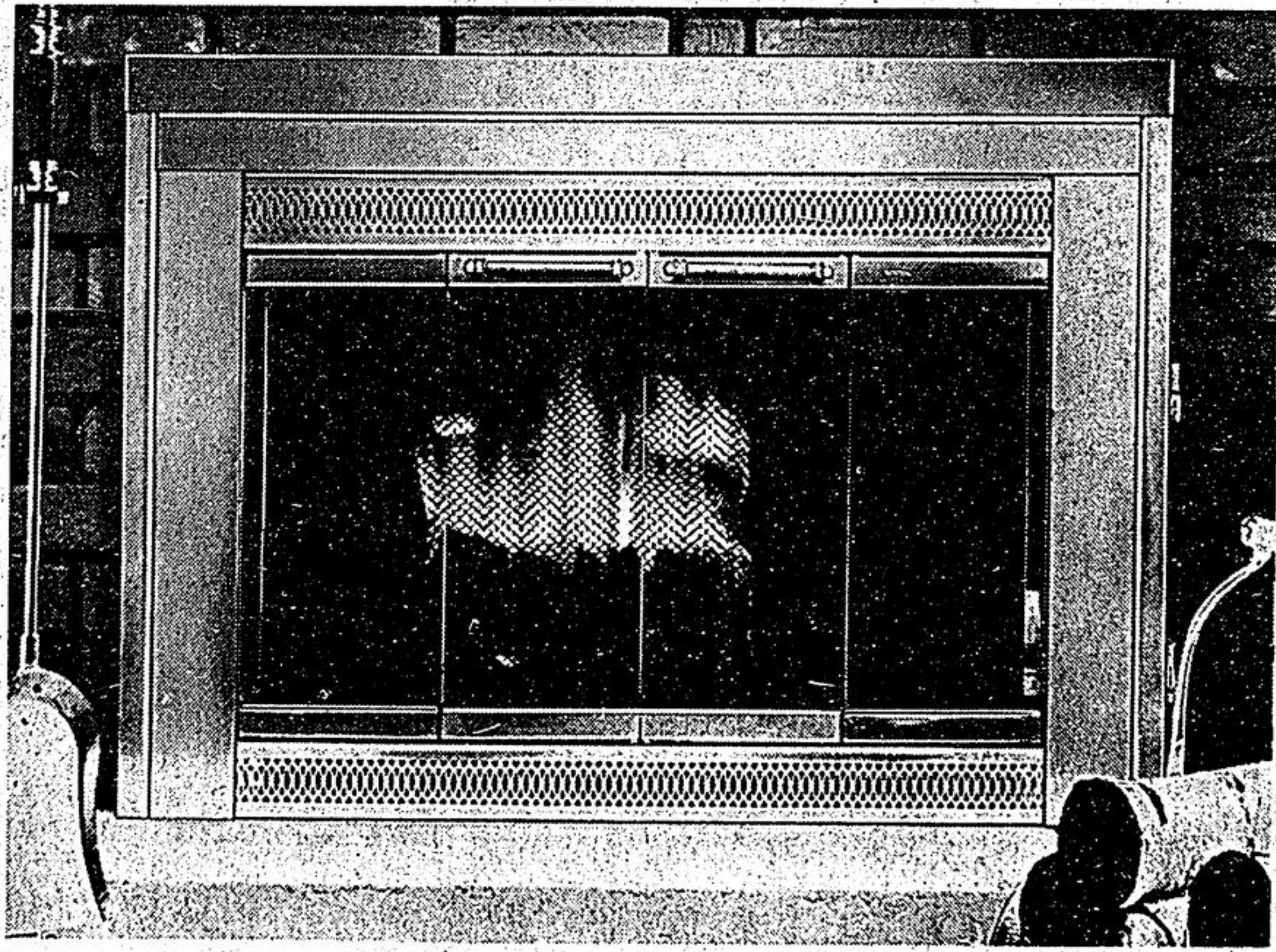
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