

A Potomac Tradition Changes Ownership 30-yr-old+ Shoe Train purchased by 30-something businesswoman

Potomac, MD: Shoe Train was purchased recently by a savvy, spunky 30-something businesswoman who is putting her “sole” into a store that for more than 3 decades has thrived as a non-franchise business that specializes in properly fitting shoes.

July 27, 2012 - [PRLog](#) -- Potomac, MD: Cabin John Mall’s Shoe Train, for some customers a three-generation tradition, was purchased recently by a savvy, spunky 30-something businesswoman. Marina Fradlin, who hails from New York City, is putting her “sole” into the store has thrived as a non-franchise business that specializes in properly fitting shoes. Fradlin purchased the store in September. Over the past nine months, she has carefully balanced her hip flare with the store’s traditional business model – a model that made this “little engine” of a shoe store a success story.

After more than 3 decades at its helm, last Fall former owner Ed Jurgrau, who opened the store in 1979, sold the business for personal reasons. With waits of up to 2 hours just to have a shoe properly fitted by Jurgrau, he continues to work at the store though he is cutting back his hours and has handed over the day-to-day operations to its new owner to Fradlin.

“Everyone knows that Ed is Shoe Train,” says Fradlin, who consults with Jurgrau daily about how to make the store the best it can be. “Ed sold the business to me because he knew that I would work with him to make Shoe Train even better. I have hired a marketing, PR and social media company, sasse agency, to bring this fantastic, traditional store into the 21st Century,” says Fradlin, who moved here recently from New York City. An admitted shoe “collector,” Fradlin is a businesswoman who understands what made Jurgrau’s business a success, even through the advent of box stores and more than one recession. “Ed had a formula that helped him ride out more than one storm. He’s the ‘Little Engine that could,’ and he did. There are a lot of lessons that can be learned from Ed who survived with a traditional niche business. Is it a fluke that Shoe Train survived? Or, did Ed understand that his business would only survive if he had an educated, well-paid staff that he treats well while at the same time offering old-fashioned customer service. Ed nailed customer service and I plan to keep his tradition alive and build on it.”

With a hip, new Facebook page where Fradlin engages with her customers, an interactive new website that offers both educational and fun information, Fradlin has also taken it upon herself to reach out to the community – a community that knows Shoe Train well as a traditional store that offers a properly fitted shoe. Fradlin has created an informative quarterly speaker series that is free and open to the public.

In August, Shoe Train’s Event Engine hosts Flip into Fashion (ripe with a “red carpet”). With the small business owner in mind, Shoe Train is teaming up with Carl M. Freeman Companies and other Cabin John retailers to support MCPS’s back to school supplies drive. All in attendance are encouraged to bring school supplies as donations for those in need while enjoying fun filled evening of children’s fashions modeled by local children ages 2 to 12. This is the third in a series of free community outreach events sponsored by Shoe Train.

In April, to mark National Youth Sports Safety Month, Shoe Train hosted, Don’t let your kids' sports injuries “spin” out of control with Former Harlem Globetrotter, Mike Wilson, and pediatric orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Richard Reff. While Wilson entertained the children (and parents) with basketball tricks and offered tips on how to talk to coaches to keep kids safe on the field/court, Reff, discussed the importance of well-fitted athletic equipment/protection and how best to avoid athletic injuries.

In January, Shoe’s Train’s inaugural outreach event, Transitions: cruising, walking, running, featured

Montgomery County psychologist, Dr. Julie Bindeman, who discussed with parents how best to encourage movement in their young walkers. Bindeman also helped parents with their own transitions as they watched their children make their first foray into independence.

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