

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Ma Maison

Portsmouth is home to the well-known Commodore Theatre, the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame and the nationally recognized design shop, Ma Maison. Vice President and CEO, Elaine Caplan opened Ma Maison (French for my house) in 2001 on High Street, in quaint Olde Towne Portsmouth. Elaine has over 29 years of interior design experience and has been featured in Better Home and Gardens magazine and HGTV's "Designer's Challenge."

Ma Maison is lavishly decorated with gorgeous fabrics, beautiful furniture and colorful accents. The store carries a permanent inventory of about 300 bolts of fabric and numerous chandeliers, lamps, upholstered accent furniture and more. "Our main focus is assisting clients all over Hampton Roads to create an environment in their homes where they can relax and enjoy their surroundings," says Elaine. Ma Maison has an experienced design staff that specializes in re-upholstery, window treatments and more.

Elaine has been an interior designer for most of her life. She began her career in London, England and now advises people in Virginia and other areas of the country. Her biggest challenge so far, as with any business, is "making people



fully prepared and just learn as they go along. Elaine said she wished she knew "how to be more discerning and how to use energy in the right places back when I first started." She has developed quite a portfolio over the years, and is undoubtedly capable of transforming any room into a royal suite.

As a retailer, Elaine's says her greatest success is, "the many clients who tell us that we have made their homes beautiful, and they return again and again as the years go by." Retailers face numerous challenges as the economy changes and consumers become more cautious in their spending. Ma Maison sells décor products and services, and assists clients in improving the quality of their homes. Everyone is on a tight budget, but Elaine explains, "People's budgets and personalities vary greatly, and our job is to give the client the best value for their money as well as accommodate their tastes for color and design." Elaine's favorite part about owning her



own company is, that it enables her to make adjustments as the market changes.

Owning Ma Maison has taught Elaine a great deal about retail over the years. If she could offer others advice about starting their own business, she would explain the importance of advertising. A business can not be successful without a client/customer base, and the only way to gain a strong clientele is to advertise and promote your business. "Inventory is helpful so people can visualize the different choices they have," explains Elaine. "It is also important for customers to see your courtesy, efficiency, promptness and commitment."

For more information on the services Ma Maison provides or to view Elaine's elaborate portfolio, visit her website, www.maisonlc.com. Ma Maison is located at 630 High Street, in Olde Towne Portsmouth.

